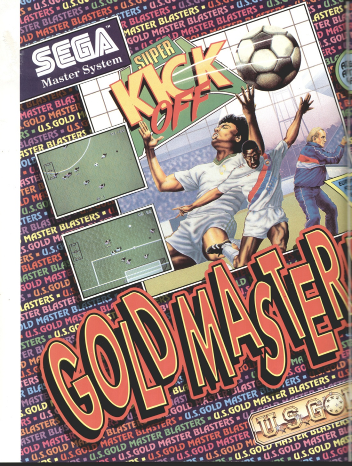
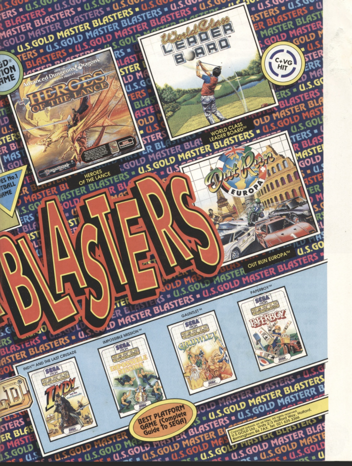

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FEBRUARY 1992
THE SEGA G
SEGA FORCE
HEAD TO HEAD WITH YOUR GAMES FORCE TEAM!
There are so many we didn't have the room to fit them all in last month's issue, so here are THE REST! This bunch of gaming dead-heads are as lean, mean and raunchy (like to think so) as the others, but they get the great Issue Two of SEGA FORCE all to themselves... lucky, lucky, lucky!
My fave game's gear — I collect the lot, Master, Mega, Gear, CD-ROM, Laser Disc... you name it — I got it, and it's generally much bigger than anyone else's.
JONATHAN RIGNALL — MANAGING DIRECTOR
Jonathan's older bro's editor of Mean-Minded Machines (hiss), but Jonathan's nicer — he makes the publisher pay u so we lick his ars gratia arti... He lives with a panther in Ludlow, comes from Aberystwyth and was born in Stevenage — he's confused...
CLAIRE MORLEY — REVIEWER
Claire, 20, commutes from Telford (the roundabout of the Universe) in a car everyone calls Basil. She dislikes canoeing but is very proud of the fact that she can do an Eskimo Roll.
I like scuba diving, cream crackers and Kevin Costner. My fave used to be Sonic the Hedgehog, but recently I've developed a violent streak and Pitfighter is tops.
PAUL MELLERICK — REVIEWER
Paul's a Leicester Sega nut. Before joining SEGA FORCE he ran his own mail order company. Likes slagging games Claire likes, writing off cars and he never takes off his baseball cap — his head's too big!
I love Segas and often boogey away the night to Streets of Rage and other groovy Sega sound tracks. As for the haircut, yes I did pay for it, and no I haven't been run over by a train!
I'm the best Sega gamesplayer in the country. Faves are EA Hockey and John Madden '92, on which I'm unbeatable. I complete games to Slayer and Metallica on the hi-fi.
ALAN GREEN — REVIEWER
Al's fave TV's Going Live (if he gets up in time). Currently he's battlinmg in court for a shop-lifting spree at Oxfam — Al will do anything to keep up with fashion!
My favourites are beating reviewers over the head with floppy disks and answering irate parents' letters about Oli's illustrations.
ROGER KEAN — PUBLISHER
Roger's been on computer mags so long most of his early readers are already dead (or bought Amigas — same thing). Master at the old Speccy Penetrator, he's not bad at Sonic and Streets of Rage (he's always in one...). But he pays us, so we like him lots and lick his patent leather trainers.
OLIVER FREY — DRAWIST
World-famous artist and severe upsetter of mums for his bloodthirsty pictures, Oli's been illustrating longer than's good for his tortured personality. Favourites: dry martini cocktails (what do you keep under your tails?), Akira, Sonic and SEGA FORCE domination.
Favourites: my turbo-charged 2-litre, fuel-injected Skoda (with optional electric massager), playing head-to-head GG games and Super Mario 3 — AARRGH!
I prefer playing with myself. I mean it takes balls to pit wits with a computer and the climax is much more rewarding when you win.
THE CHUBBERS — DESIGNERS
Brothers Ian 'Eeeee' Chubb and Paul Chubb (aka 'Charlie', aka 'Chike') help Mark Kendrick design the pages he doesn't want to do. Ian (handsome, dark-haired) is the elder by at least four pages and leaves most women the way he found them... Whereas Charlie (fair-haired, but it's a lie) finds most women the way they want to be left. As all our design's electronic, neither lad has much lead in his pencil.
After Sonic, Sonic and Sonic, I play Centurion 'cos I like the way they carry off the corpses!



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SUPER LASER POWER!

56 It's here! We got one in as soon as it hit UK shores. Mega-CD mania is about to break! Read about the machine, its awesome power, the first two games released for it and all the ones to follow soon! We cover *Nostalgia 1907*, *Earnest Evans*, *Lunar (The Silver Star)* and loads of others! PLUS...

60 *SOL FEACE* and *HEAVY NOVA* — the first two Mega-CD releases in Japan, advance played to the sound of CD music and explosions!

THE CUTTING EDGE



12 Prepare to be shocked! The Black Marshall pays a visit to Razorsoft, controversial masters of gore and sleaze on your Mega Drive! Check out *Slaughter Sport* and the almost-ready *Death Duel* from the guys who brought you *Stormlord*.

PHREAKY PERIPHERALS

64 The weird and wonderful world of Sega peripherals, from the most essential joypad to the most useless, from screen magnifiers to 3-D goggles, it's all here!

GET STUFFED AT THE PITTSTOP

45 A whopping, bumper crop of amazing tips: the complete solutions in words and glorious pics to Megablaster QUACKSHOT and DECAPATTACK. Mega-tips on ROBOCOD (smug sod), SPIDERMAN and JOHN MADDEN '92!

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44 Win a colour TV, 10 joypads and membership of the UK's biggest games club: the superb Special Reserve!

USA HERE 'N' NOW

20 All the latest news from the US of A. *RBI Baseball* and *Roadblasters* (pictured below) finally hit the Genesis, while weirdo puzzle game *Populs* pops onto the GG! But that's not all — you could win this amazing walkie-talkie shaped like a Pepsi bottle, or a WWF special FX microphone!



MEAN 'N' DIRTY

42 The Sega Force crew of the year 2020. Urban terrorists and street fightin' punks in another superb Oli masterpiece for your bedroom wall!

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41 Join the SEGA FORCE crew for a year with a great subscriptions offer with loadsa enticing freebies!

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Gotcha...!

The future's here, and it's named the Mega-CD! Not just a high-spec CD-ROM drive, it's jam-packed with chips to give you things like stunning hardware scaling, and a co-processor that makes it practically a 32-bit machine.

Pity there's nothing yet to really show off its amazing potential, but rumours have it that arcade conversions of *Rad Racer* will be virtually perfect copies (summer time), an amazing achievement considering *Rad* is one of the most impressive coin-ops around. Watch out for *Sonic 2*, too!

Sega ballsed up this Christmas, hiring Jumbo jets to ship in more product, yet still failing to meet more than 50% of demand. But how long will demand last? As long as the games are good! If the first step in the '90s boom was the development of fast, detailed graphics — to involve anyone, not just over-imaginative kids who could see Princess Zarlon of Zoon's thighs flashing in a blocky, monochromatic wobble of sprite — the second will be game size.

Up to now the choice has been games with massive, convoluted gameplay but minimal graphics (most RPGS) or spectacular looking arcaders with few levels, and a plotline even Paul Mellerick could understand. You can see why Sega objects to game renting — too many can be completed too quickly.

The Mega-CD relaxes the size restriction, so eventually someone's going to do a game to fill it. In time movies as spectacular but simplistic as *Terminator 2* might be seen as less something to go and see, and more to participate in on CD-ROM machines!

Sega have the market to themselves at the moment, PC Engine, CDTV and PC drives can't compare in power, and given a reasonable price who could resist? If Sega play their cards right the M-CD could lead a real entertainment revolution — and SEGA FORCE will be there to bring you the full story as it happens. The future starts here! *STU*

UK RELEASES FOR FEB

● Mega Drive
Back To The Future II
Back To The Future III
Buck Rogers
Double Dragon
Ivan 'Iron Man' Stewart's Off-Road Racer
Marble Madness
Ninja Burai
Paperboy
Toki
Winter Challenge
Xenon 2

● Master System
Asterix
Klax
Paperboy
Prince Of Persia
Rampart
Shadow of the Beast
Super Space Invaders

● Game Gear
Baseball
Fantasy Zone
Halley Wars
Ms Pacman
Pengo (out now)
Putter Golf
Spiderman
Xenon 2

CLUSTER'S FIRST STAND

● If you're looking for something a bit bigger than the standard Sega Joypad, and something with a stick, Cluster Corporation's CLUSTER STICK E's (above) is going down great guns with Mega Drivers in the gutters of Tokyo 2 — a mere snip at 6,500 yen. In addition to the usual [A], [B] and [C] buttons, there's a variable speed turbo option, three turbo trigger buttons and a slow function switch (for un-supersonic players over the age of sixteen). The stick action's got eight directions, too, so it should cope with most situations. It's about twice the size of the joypad, and a bit heavier so it sits well on a table top, and the extra weight comes in handy when you want something to hurl at the TV screen after screwing up one of those familiar moves you know so well.

THE LATE NEW ZEALAND STORY

Main cart news this month is Tiki the Kiwi's flight to the Master System which has been (ever so) slightly delayed, his early '92 release date slipping to early*ish* '92 — March-April, say.

But at least we got a screenshot, of sorts: the programmer's got all the graphics for the first level but he hasn't put them all together yet. So scan the various pics, scrunch up your eyes and imagine they're all together. Yep, looks great, doesn't it?

Expect more on **Tecmagik**'s *New Zealand Story* next month, hopefully an interview with the programmer 'n' stuff like that. *New Zealand Story* was a brill game in the arcades and on loadsa home computers, so it should be a biggy on the MS, too!

LOST IN JAPAN

Last month French software house **UbiSoft** boasted their intention to import some of the hottest Japanese Mega Drive games. Subsequently, however, Sega raised objections and UbiSoft execs have been scurrying around Tokyo attempting to avoid another of those whopping legal actions Japanese console makers are so adept at throwing around.

Hopefully everything will work out and we can look forward to large crates crashing down on UK docks with official imports of games by **Micronet**, **Renovation** and the **Wolf Team**.

Many of the games have long been available as grey imports, but others such as *Earnest Evans* and *Heavy Nova* have yet to appear and will first be launched on CD-ROM!

The Wolf Team have earned quite a reputation on the Mega Drive (see this month's Advance Play of *Sol Feace*, immediately after our super Mega-CD feature) and one official release we're waiting for is *El Viento*. This is named not after the sultry Japlish girls adorning the cover and starring in the game but a strange dark storm cloud (smog?) that envelops New York.

Through a time barrier comes Annette, a young warrior girl armed with a nifty razor boomerang and magic skills who wages war on street gangs and the evil force which summoned her.

The streets and highrise buildings are acrawl with violent, unsociable low-lives armed with the latest in warmongery. Villains come in various guises, some riding vehicles such as motorbikes and convertible pink Cadillacs. If they can't shoot Annette they drop flowerpots and chairs on her from a great height.

El Viento — tale of a nice sprite

Annette's a nicely animated sprite, easy to control and very quick on her feet. The streets are superbly detailed and suitably grim-looking, music is haunting and FX are adequate. Explosions are spectacular and playability high. It's a pity the long level one is so easy, apart from the irritatingly tough end-level guardian, but *El Viento* is an amusing and enjoyable game which deserves a quick UK release.

MEGGER 'N' MEGGER

SEGA FORCE EXCLUSIVE!

Barely have we got over the excitement of Sega's Mega-CD machine than another is announced! Now video and hi-fi giants **JVC** are entering the consoles market too, with a Sega-compatible CD machine called the **Wonder Mega**.

The Wonder Mega, unlike the Mega-CD, is an all-in-one unit (CD drive and Mega Drive/Genesis unit) that has been developed jointly by Sega and JVC. There are no pictures yet, but because both units are combined in one casing, we can expect the Wonder Mega to be more compact than the Mega Drive-and-Mega-CD combo.

And when's this happening? In Japan JVC expect to hit the gutters some time in April with a 45,000 yen price tag (about £200).

Depending on how successful the Japanese introduction is, JVC will develop UK and European markets at a later date (leaving plenty of time for the Graham Porters of this world, no doubt, although word has it that there will be substantial alterations in the machine's configuration for different territories).

When — if — it gets here, we expect the price to be much higher than a straight conversion would indicate, but still probably better value for new buyers than a twin-unit purchase when the Mega-CD becomes officially available.

Japanese sources say that JVC will concentrate on the hi-fi and electrical outlets, leaving Sega to its traditional toy and video game shops.

More news on that one, as they say, when we get it.

SEGA SWOOPS

By M Rosenthal & A Pitt

Mimicking Nintendo in the '80s, Sega in the USA appear to be going after everybody who even looks sideways at their game consoles.

To reduce circuitry costs they changed the Mega Drive's chips, which at the same timey locked out **Ballistic**'s *Onslaught* (but not the newer *Turrican* and *Mike Dikta Football*), as well as displaying a title screen indicating licencees.

Now they're after Accolade, the company behind the Ballistic label, who produce Mega Drive games without being part of the Sega family. Accolade say they're not infringing, that they've worked out how to manufacture cartridges without help from Sega, in legalese 'without violating any intellectual property rights'. Sega say they are — and here come the lawyers again.

Stand by for a lengthy battle.

In all this wrangling the ones who really suffer in the end are us poor sods down game-freak alley. Software publishers once claimed pirates took all their profits, now it goes on the legal eagles.

ADEY BABE'S MOST MEANINGFUL NATTER BIT

● Well, 'ere we go again, Issue 2 of SF. The first ish sold like hot cakes. All thanks to me, I hasten to add. My apologies to a well-known Wolverhampton newsagent where I spent the last few Saturdays hiding other Sega mags behind SEGA FORCE on the shelves. It worked! What an ace PR man I am!

● Everyone's goin' on about these clever new Sega Terradrive thingies — sort of cross between a Mega Drive an' a PC computer. But then you get tangled up in techie matters like (keyboards) CGA, EGA and VGA colour displays. Sega claim it all looks better with VGA, but look what happened to me! Best leave eggies and veggies to widget idjits, I say.

BEFORE VGA

AFTER VGA

BEFORE VGA

AFTER VGA

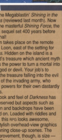
● Before I go, a warm welcome back to Big Stu, our Ed. After a short stint in 'ospital he was soon back with us, crackin' the proverbial whip. It's almost nice to have you back, Stu. Can I leave early tonight, please?!!!

SHINING MEMORY FORCE!

Gutter Talk



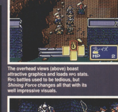




First came Megablastin' *Shining in the Darkness* (reviewed last month). Now comes the masterful *Shining Force*, the amazing sequel set 400 years before the original!

Action takes place on the remote island of Loon, east of the setting for *Darkness*. Hidden on the island is a false god's treasure which ancient myth says has the power to turn a mortal into either a god or devil. Your job's to prevent the treasure falling into the evil clutches of the invading army, who want the powers for their own dastardly purposes.

The look and feel of *Darkness* has been preserved but aspects such as animation and backdrops have been improved on. Loaded with riddles and hazards, this RPG looks awesome, mixing stylish overhead-view graphics with stunning close-up scenes. The main improvement, though, is size — *Shining Force* is a whopping 12 Megabit cart (15,036K)! Japan release date: 27 March.



The overhead views (above) boast attractive graphics and loads RPG stats. RPG battles used to be tedious, but *Shining Force* changes all that with its well impressive visuals.

Time, below right, for a quick gallop, methinks!

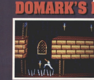






KISSES Big thanks to **Lesley Walker** and **Sega Europe** for their generous supply of games for review. Thanks too for great help from: **Peter Hewitt** at **KC's Computers & Console Magic** (0509 211799) for official products like *Bonanza Bros* and *G-LOC*, as well as advance plays of import *El Viento*. **Electro Games** (081 530 8246) for supplying official releases *QuackShot* and *Shining in the Darkness*. **Console Concepts** (0782 712759) for *Golden Axe II*, *Donald Duck*, *Double Dragon II* and stacks of Japanese imports which arrived just past this ish's deadline, but will be advance-played to death next month!

DOMARK'S DYNAMIC DUO



Watch out for those spikes, young man. Hope you're wearing your Doc Martens! *Prince Of Persia* MS

Gutter Talk

A Prince of Persia's work is never done, that sword must be red hot by now!

Below: They don't make them like they used to, do they? *Paper Boy* MD

They say a woman's work is never done, and no doubt Jim Tripp (although he *is* a man) would have something to say about that one!

'Who's Jim Tripp?' asks a nation of Sega Force readers! Well, he's the guy who's been given the unenviable task of converting *Prince of Persia* for the Master System.

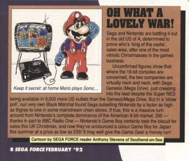
Jim's been hunched in front of a monitor for the past 12 months, bashing away at that keyboard of his (they use keyboards to write games, y'know), trying to better an already awesome game. Ten thousand McDonald's and gallons of coffee later, by golly, we think he's done it!

The Master System version promises to be virtually identical to that of the PC cos Jim's used *every* frame of animation! A formidable achievement when you consider the Prince has 248 frames to his name!

, Domark have a sure-fire winner on their hands here!

Also on the conversion track, this time for Mega Drive, is that venerable arcade classic; *Paper Boy*.

The game boasts big, bright, colourful graphics and superb animation. It was a hit in the mid-'80s on most home computers, now MD owners can experience the thrill of flinging copies of the *Sunday Sport*, errrrr, sorry, *The Guardian* onto people's doorsteps. More news on this little gem when we get it. In the meantime, sit back and marvel at the screen shots...



OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR!

Keep it secret: at home Mario plays Sonic...

Sega and Nintendo are battling it out in the old US of A, determined to prove who's 'king of the castle', sales-wise, after one of the most vitriolic Christmasses in the games business.

Unconfirmed figures show that where the 16-bit consoles are concerned, the two companies are virtually neck and neck, with Sega Genesis (Mega Drive) just creeping into the lead despite the Super NES being available in 9,000 more US outlets than the Genesis/Mega Drive. But In a 'straw poll', our very own Black Marshal found Sega outselling Nintendo by a factor as high as thgree to one in some mainstream chain stores. If true, this is a massive turn around from Nintendo's complete dominance of the American 8-bit market. Still — thanks in part to BBC Radio One — Nintendo's Game Boy certainly took the biscuit for sales this UK Christmas, and now they've announced a colour Game Boy for Japan this summer at a price as low as £55! It may well give the Game Gear a money run!

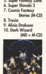
Cartoon by SEGA FORCE reader Anthony Stevens of Southend-on-Sea

BIG IN JAPAN

● This month in Japan the big story is, unsurprisingly, the **Mega-CD**: 15,000 units were sold on the first day of release (12 December). Our Japanese reporter did the rounds of Tokyo contacts, and the level of M-CD excitement can be judged from the number of CD-ROM titles featuring in the Top Ten most-wanted up and coming games:

● **WANTED!**

1. Lunar (The Silver Star) (M-CD)
2. Shining Force
3. Super Monaco GP II
4. 3x3 Eyes (M-CD)
5. Super Fantasy Zone
6. Super Shinobi 2
7. Cosmic Fantasy Stories (M-CD)
8. Trasia
9. Alisia Drakoon
10. Dark Wizard (MD + M-CD)



Wanted badly on the M-CD: *Lunar (The Silver Star)* and, below, *Cosmic Fantasy Stories*

● And here's this month's best selling Mega Drive games in Tokyo:

● **TOP TEN**

1. Fantasia
2. Rolling Thunder
3. Monster World 3
4. Run Ark
5. Wanderers from Ys
6. Senjoh No Ohkami
7. Block Out
8. Sonic the Hedgehog
9. Beast Warrior
10. Advanced Daisenryaku

● Of course, the big Game Gear item is Sonic, due out here soon. Six levels: Green Hill, Bridge, Jungle, Labyrinth, Scrap Brain and Sky Base, are backed up by its own Special Stage. Watch!

ACCLAIM THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Cap'n Bob Maxwell may have thought naff all of computer games, but his Mirrorsoft became one of the UK's biggest and most innovative software houses.

Suits driving Rollers 'n' Cadillacs don't give much of an eff about the effects they have on people when they're up on the fortieth floor above the gutters, though, and Cap'n Bob's, 'rob the pensioners to keep me in hot dinners' business practices have sunk Mirrorsoft.

Still, it's not all over for *Aliens III* and the like cos American giants Acclaim have stepped in to buy up the company, with which it had a licensing agreement covering the conversion of a huge range of software, mainly for Sega.

Acclaim are eager to assure gamers that they'll be bringing out all the forthcoming Mirrorsoft titles, such as *Aliens III* and *Back To The Future III*, but this hasn't saved Mirrorsoft's staff — all but a handful were made redundant soon after returning from their Xmas holidays (hope they didn't invest their pensions with Maxwell).

As SEGA FORCE goes to press Mirrorsoft is in a two-week limbo as it waits for Acclaim to bring in its own people.

Unfortunately even if Mirrorsoft does get back online soon, Sega has put back to March the release of last month's Megablaster *Speedball II*. All that's currently available is the grey-imported American Genesis version, which only works with Japanese machines running at a different speed to UK machines.

HOT FROM LAS VEGAS!

STOP PRESS from the CES show, Marshal M Rosenthal says: 'There's loadsa great new products being shown in various development stages. Big news from Acclaim — they've launched a new label called **Flying Edge**. Showing all new Super NES product, much is being converted to Mega Drive now, including a Bart Simpson, a Spiderman, and X-Man title and a new wrestling game.

'**Electronic Arts** are showing a Mega Drive version of the Psygnosis *Leander* title, which looks real hot, and I've also seen **US Gold**'s *Strider 2*, which should be ready in a few months, with a September release date.

'Tremendous product, too, from **Sega**, topped by *Evander Holyfield's Boxing* [US Heavyweight champ], done with 4th generation programing technique, to give wiast-up, huge characters, so real you can see the sweat and spittle when they hit each other! There's also the cutesy *Wonderboy* and *Kid Chameleon* to watch out for spring to summer — the latter's going to be BIG.

So good are Sega's new titles, they've got USA Nintendo running scared and asking licensees to go mad with three to five new titles each, *fast*! More next issue!



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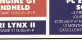
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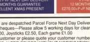
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Advance Play!

MEGA DRIVE md

The Lee Brothers are at it again, only this time ADRIAN PITT controls their destiny and gets shredded by a combine harvester in the process!

If you haven't a friend in the world, DON'T buy *Double Dragon II*, 'cos it's most definitely a two-player game. Even though you can change the game difficulty and whop up the number of lives to five, it's still irritatingly tough. Why? I hear you ask. Is Adey-babes a bit of a wimp, isn't he up to it?

Of course he is! It's just the control method is the dumbest, stupidest system in the history of gaming. Not content with a sluggish control response, the designers have worked hard to confuse you: run to the right and kick with [A], jump with [B] and punch with [C]. Run to the left and these controls go completely arse about tit!

It's really hard to remember which button does what, especially during battle as you have to be in exactly the right place next to a baddie to thwack him, or he gets you first. For a beat-'em-up, the controls are seriously shoddy!

If Sega bother to bring the game over to Europe it shouldn't be too difficult to fix this fault, but unfortunately this is far from the game's only weakness.

There's an okay scene-setting: the brothers Lee watch dumbfounded as girlfriend Marilyn is shot dead by a gang of ruffians for no very good reason. The brothers are then free to seek vengeance, but they're not the most handsome sprites to grace a Mega Drive.

They're colourful and animation isn't bad, with some good flying kicks and somersaults, but they're small and not well-detailed — neither they nor the bland backgrounds are ever going to worry *Golden Axe*'s graphic artist.

However the coin-op's getting on a bit and these graphics are reasonably close to it, as are the limited sound FX consisting of a banal tune and basic grunts and groans!

Smashing fun

Unlike *Axe* you're not stuck with a single weapon, you start off empty-handed but by defeating enemies you can grab their hardware: shovels, maces, throwing knives and crates all come in handy.

Each level is split into sections; kill the odd crook or six and a hand appears, informing you to move on. There *is* a time limit for each mission, but it's not incredibly tight.

Later levels, such as the warehouse, MidWest and temple, provide a tough enough challenge — but beware of that combine harvester out in the sticks, it's got a mind of its own!

Well, *Double Dragon II* certainly brought out the aggressive side in me, but mainly for the wrong reasons. By the end of a play session the temptation to jump up and down on my joypad was irresistable!

Deduct £15 from my paypacket, thank you very much Mr Sega! Nevertheless the numerous levels, considerable challenge and tough end-level villains made the coin-op a big hit, so with a bit of elbow grease on the control system in particular anything is possible. **ADE**

It may be a shot in the dark, but I reckon your wee girlfriend's about to get pumped full of lead!

Pick up a mace and clout that bloke's face. My God, it rhymes!

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American games designers Razorsoft kicked up a storm in the USA and beat a rap to get them gagged. In an exclusive SEGA FORCE interview, MARSHAL M ROSENTHALtalks to the guys who prefer graphic violence to cutesyness.

Profile

RAZORSOFT

AND THE VIOLENCE THAT BE

You want action, excitement, violence, and some off-color stuff? Then you're thinking of Razorsoft — a third-party Sega Genesis licensee with a chip on their shoulder. But that's not bad — they just want to do fun stuff *their* way. Which means pools of blood, mayhem, coiling guts washing the pavement, the DARK SIDE. It's just a video game, right?

Not to Sega of America, who tried to pull the plug on what the 'R' wants to produce. First, look at the picture. Razorsoft comes out with translations of computer games — using the graphic power of the Genesis to create hot results. First up — *Technocop*. A car racing game with criminals to be pursued and then taken. Scooped in a net or shot. Wrapped up tight, or dissolved into mulch. Graphic ugliness. Of course the game sells phenomenally well — ranking as the No.3 hit of 1990.

Then comes *Stormlord*. More graphic violence, more trouble for Sega in the guise of risqué and 'questionable' female images. But a hot fantasy adventure game that's tough to beat. Full of action, and driving the Genesis system to the max. Until Sega tries to pull the switch.

Beating the rap

Flash back two months. Court case: Sega vs. Razorsoft. At issue is whether Sega will yank their license, or their games, or dictate their future. Sweat, confusion, hair pulling, expensive lawyers.

As Mike Brazier, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, says: 'It's a good thing you're talking to me now, boy would I have said a lot of unpleasant things back then. Razorsoft felt that vast cultural, philosophical and marketing differences could not be overcome by pursuing normal business channels. These differences unfortunately resulted in the ensuing lawsuit.'

'Now' means that the situation has been resolved, the results acceptable to both sides. Except there's a gag order going, neither Razorsoft or Sega will say what happened. But we can see what didn't; the games haven't been yanked, nor the licence, and the new ones in development aren't one bit 'cutesy'

As Brazier puts it: 'Over a period of time, concessions were made by both parties involved, the lawsuit was settled outside the courtrooms and our business is proceeding better than ever.'

So what is it that makes Razorsoft tick? For this answer, we'll sequester Brazier. To find out about the past, but also what's upcoming.

Grown-ups want fun too

'First you got to understand our philosophy,' he begins. 'To us, 'cutesy' means mundane and boring. There are plenty of cartoon character games out there, but that's not what we think 16-bit is all about. It's not just the nine-year-olds, but the guys who've grown up a bit. They still want to have fun, they want it all — great graphics like in *Terminator 2*, the movie. Special effects onscreen that are exciting and adventurous.'

Chief programmer Darrin Stubbington of PUNK Development agrees. A native Brit transplanted to California, Stubbington points out that 'games on a console require reworking to make them effective. And better'.

'*Technocop* was fine on computer, but we improved on it,' he says. '*Slaughter Sport* is another example. It started life on computer as *Tongue of the Fat Man*, by Activision. We took out the betting (boring), and beefed up the action and characters. Adding graphic enhancements and sound effects.'

All come as heroes, most leave as corpses

Brazier interrupts with a delighted squeal: 'Wait until you see the 'heavy metal' female — you gotta check out her Mohawk hair cut. If you look closely, you'll see that there's a mouth IN the hair. When she whips her hair around, it'll try and bite you if.it gets the chance.'

'Exactly,' agrees Stubbington. 'It's things like that which we add to cause a rush and make the game uniquely a Razorsoft product. *Slaughter Sport* is a 6-meg futuristic martial arts combat game that offers role-playing elements in a two-player fight to the finish. Creatures from across the galaxy have come to compete. And kill. All come to be heroes; most leave as corpses, or worst yet, a lunch time meal for the ravenous sand sharks.'

Brazier also points out that there are 24 of the most bizarre characters ever put on the screen, in 306 different bouts. 'With hilarious [read disgusting] sound effects of the combatants and their many weapons and magical items.'

Slaughter time

Stop and take a bit of a look at *Slaughter Sport* then. Each fighter has his/her/its own style — one that you must better.

There's Sheeba, the 'bad girl of the galaxy' and Stump, the Bulgar champion. Braniac, a blend of machine and flesh, and Robochic — one sexy mess of bolts. Edwina, the 'first lady of the Pits' and Weezle, El Toro, Spidra.

The names say it all, hey — you're just a snotty human. Then there's Mondor, the filthy slob of a blubber — also one of the toughest around. The guy with the big mouth, big stomach. Big mouth IN his big stomach.

Selecting a character takes you to the Characteristics screen. Here you can see what strengths and weapons you have — and consider ways to improve on them. Using your cash wisely, choose from three categories: MAGIC WEAPONS, HEALTH, and ATTACK.



Mondu The Fat has a 'taste' for violence. *Slaughter Sport* is really a straightforward beat-'em-up, but the programmers' evident delight in disgusting graphics pulses from every frame, taking the game to a new level.

You're Rex (circle below), up against the likes of Edwina, Rameses, Robochik (left) and (over page) Guano.

A mild appearance in *Technocop* (above) hides a deal of graphic ugliness. Designed to make the squeamish squeal, it makes the game No. 3 in 1990. With *Stormlord*'s 'questionable' images (far left), Sega in the USA finally tries pulling the Razorsoft plug.



Weird folks have their own strokes. Guano (top) breaks wind from behind. Dirty birdie.

Mondu's a smug fat sumbitch you want to smash. Below, he gives Webra a damned good licking, yum-yum...

Magic Weapons are special forces to employ. These include being able to temporarily paralyse your opponent, or puzzle him. Or slow him down, fade from sight, or create a poisonous smog cloud in front of you (no effect if the opponent is from New York).

Try FATSO — it gives you the same power as Mondor's bounce (whole lotta shakin' going on). Up to four Magic Weapons can be purchased, and are activated with the [A][B][C] buttons. Health works from the direction pad and increases strength depending on your purchase, while Attack increases your power, for more damage.

Awesome fun

Now it's time to kick some butt! Learn the various configurations of buttons and direction, for while all fighters have individualised moves, they all follow the same basic pattern.

Timing is all — you don't want to end up in a pool of blood do you? Take time and practise, moves reverse when you're facing left vs. right — there's plenty to keep in mind while fighting. It's a test of skill, getting the feel of your opponent. Sizing them up. Then wasting 'em. Winning means big bucks to use to buy more power and weapons for the next round. And glory of course.

Visually, the game's a hoot. Scrolling horizontally as you move, the fighting arena is constantly changing, with clever parallax scrolling and the illusion of depth going on behind. But there's no time for looking at anything but your opponent.

The one-player game has you taking them all on (whew!), while the two-player mode is an exhibition match. Large characters, and strange ones alright. Even the sight of big, blubbery Mondor opening the game by waddling in to welcome you to the Fight Palaces (in his own voice). Much more awesome and fun than the wimpy computer version.

Downhill all the way

Also on the immediate horizon is *Death Duel*, Razorsoft's first original title and 8-megs to boot **(see following pages)**. The rating for this game (yes, Razorsoft is putting such on their programs) is GV-14. For graphic violence.

What's even farther down the road — which with these guys means just another couple of months or so?

There's *Stormlord 2*, continuing the action, the magic, the violence. Plus *Pigskin*, a conversion from a sports arcade game. Play football in a new way, with such elements available as bribing the referee and using the scattered weapons (swords, torches, spears, garrote, whatnot) to stop an opponent DEAD in his tracks. All on a variety of non-conventional fields, filled with bottomless pits, fallen trees and trapdoors.

Using a vertical scrolling system, the action occurs in a unique 3/4 view perspective — with a beginner level of play for those who need to warm up. Speaking of which, burn the defense with a deep pass (literal sense, use a torch to set them on fire), or pummel them into submission. Only problem — there seem to be trolls out there waiting on the second string. Here be digitized sound effects, and high-density demented graphics.

Even less is known of *Vampire Killer*, planned for autumn of '92. But chances are it'll be full of the same lack of sanity you've come to expect from Razorsoft. Just don't tell Sega.

Marshal M. Rosenthal is a very mild mannered photo-journalist kind of guy. NOT!



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After Slaughter Sport can Razorsoft gore get worse? Sure! MARSHAL M ROSENTHAL, still a shivering wreck hiding in his New York loft, discovers it brings a whole new meaning to disarm your enemy

Advance Play! USA

DEATH DUEL



So okay, I know what I'm up against. It ain't too tough taking on those cyborgs — 'least not if you've got enough ammo blasting to shake their bolts loose. Personally I prefer the laser, it usually does the job even if it does overheat a bit too fast — just have two of 'em so's you can backup to one when the other's shut down.

It's those biologicals that you gotta watch out for. I mean, us humans are pretty tough, but we can't pull a leg or arm back on after it's been blown off and dust it off like nothing's happened. You just can't tell what some thing's gonna be up to — at least you know when a metal shell's been wasted.

Shoot-em-ups are all alike aren't they? You aim at a target and try to blast it away. So why do companies keep making them?

Because they're fun. And new to the instant hall of fame is Razorsoft's *Death Duel*. It's not radically different, but what it features is fast-paced, addictive action.

First time out

You're a warrior, clad in a metal robot shell — taking on a variety of opponents from across the Universe in one-on-one battle for your Federation. To save your guys from those guys. It's first-person perspective all the way, you're looking right out there at the bozo — he's doing the same to you.

Now to the mechanics. *Death Duel* is divided into two separate segments, each arcade oriented. You begin with a variation of a target shoot. Only in this case all the targets are alien things. Slimy worms burrowing out of the ground, strange quick moving potato heads, slugs, even an occasional scurrying football helmet ('least that's what it looks like to me).

The playfield is non-scrolling, with the targets moving from left to right and vice-versa. You've a targeting sight which can move in all directions, and an unlimited supply of ammo.

The Direction Pad controls the sight, with each button firing slightly different (but only one can be used at a time). [A] skims the shells just above ground, while [B] and [C] both are incoming from overhead — [B] from the left and [C] from the right. It really doesn't make any difference which is used, the results are the same — it's more of a personal feeling, as all targets can be hit by holding one button down and rapid firing (using the stream as a form of tracer shells).

Ballsed up

Now while this is going on, you're striving to reach the minimum set in order to win the round — with each target hit awarding PHEELAE, the bucks of the future (did you think you were in this for sport?). A timer is counting down, come up short and you've lost the round and must try again (providing you've one of your three tries left).

But there's some zingers too, in the form of red and brown ball heads which bounce, roll, and fly across the screen amidst the other targets. These take away PHEELAE, and should be avoided. Especially the brown ball. While the red takes away a few PHEELAE each time it's hit (always an unpleasant surprise and never the same amount each time), the brown strips you bare.

Sixty seconds may sound like a lot of time to hit 1500 P (at least at the very first round), but lose everything and hit 0 with 20 seconds to go and you can kiss a Ty goodbye.



Death Duel's title screen promises large-scale characters, and, throughout much of the game that's the case. Below: the weapons shops look similar from level to level — each with an unpleasantly snappy owner. Sandwiched between are the qualifying rounds.



Pack-punch shopping

Provided that you've hit the limit before time's up, you go to the Weapon's Shop. Here you can trade in that boring little popgun for something with a kick to it.

The proprietor is a seedy old dude, he just sits there and stares at you with contempt. He's also got a monkey on his back that needs tending too (a real monkey I mean). So after you're tired of looking at him and his pet — and reading the small LCD sign that encourages spitting and discourages drug use — it's time to select some hardware.

Trade in that boring popgun for something with a kick to it...

Which costs P of course. Now you've some to work with from the round just won, and the amount for each weapon is shown below (though no real explanation for its use is displayed).

There's three stations in which to select weapons — one to match each button. You don't have to spend all your P, but you DO have to select at least one weapon each for two of the stations.

If you've plenty of P (later on maybe]), you can go for an exotic weapon like an energy ring that'll drain your opponent, or a slo-mo cloud to make him a sitting duck — but for now stick to the basic stuff like lasers and machine guns.

Missiles aren't bad either, but grenades are cheaper and easier to handle when you're green. And be sure to check out the CHEAP SHOTS sign, as any item noted here is going for half price.



Clockwise from top left, the stat screens for: Shanox Mosaii, The Krog; Ogre; Forsal Jeraba, The Lairdin; and Slate

Hiding to nowhere

Finishing the selection, you exit and begin the second phase of *Death Duel*: Taking on an opponent out to get YOU! This is played at the Arena, a barren landscape totally void but for a series of brick-like walls lined up side by side, and spaced a few feet apart. Hiding behind the wall shields you from your opponent's blasts. Unfortunately it does the same for him against yours.

With the crowd safely out of harm's way, a cheer goes out as you enter the Arena. A pretty girl comes up and starts the action, throwing in a snide remark or taunt.

What happens next is a combination of reflexes, strategy, and plain good shooting. A target sight appears onscreen, and can be moved similarly to that as before. Using this, you sight on your opponent and fire one of your weapons until he/she/it's destroyed. And before another timer counts down, or you automatically lose the round and have to try again (the three 'tries' bit like before). Sounds simple yeh, but there's a catch.

In that you can't just stand there and blast away. You may think you're tough, but these guys going head to head are tougher. Their health meter is at the top right, your's at the lower left — and guess which gets damaged the fastest?

So you've got to shoot quickly and weave out of range, which is where those walls come in — hiding behind them right? But your opponent has the same idea, and remember you're the one that the time limit's imposed on.

Life's unfair

Okay, blast through the wall if the guy's hiding behind it. Great idea, but then 1) your weapons might run out of ammo, causing you to forfeit the round, and 2) some of the blocks are impenetrable.

Then sight through a hole in the wall and catch him off guard? Really smoking now, they don't hang out cozily so's you can wack 'em. The worst is when they move to one of the extreme walls at either end. Then they can just hang out and wait for the timer to run down.

So you've no choice but to make yourself a tar-



get in order to get a reaction, and move the guy away so you can try a shot at him. Did I mention that the laser overheats real fast and shuts down automatically just when you're starting to make some headway? Or that the jokers you'll be facing off against have some unique characteristics like invulnerable body parts? Did you think this was gonna be a cakewalk?

Body striptease

Practice will do it — lots of it, and judicious use of firepower to remove parts of your opponent. Now while you have to be careful that a blown off limb doesn't get reattached, once you've got his attention by goring up his body, a couple of good fast lasers to the head will turn it into pulp. Then the torso just settles down and you've won.

The first opponent, Shanox Mosail, is a slow-moving KROG. He can fly, but he's not too smart. And while he looks like a dragon, he doesn't spit fire — just some kind of dazzling energy balls (sorry, they hurt too). Still, he's pretty short on strategy, so just hide behind a wall and wait for him to poke his head out. Then blow him away.

Try to take the wings off first, then he's land-locked and easier to wack off. He's also got a pretty puny head, so concentrate here rather than his fat belly. Oh — he seems able to stand and hop even with one foot, so forget about taking his toes off in the hopes of getting him to stand still.

Lying in a pool of blood 'n' guts, the round's yours (this guy was easy?). Reaping more P, you've a chance now to repair your armour. Decide on where to make repairs and give up the P accordingly.

Then the next round begins with another target shoot, followed by another opponent (with new weapons available for purchase between). Each opponent along the way gets tougher and smarter — check out their stats to see what I mean (ain't gonna do so good against someone who's over a 100 victories under his belt, er, whatever they're using down there).

More P means that you can stock up heavier on weapons. It may sound like fun, but wait till you start taking on the really mean dudes. Missiles and grenades don't mean much when the fast-moving guys start dancing around. Or when they laugh (literally) at your best shot.

Going bad-ass

Death Duel features nine opponents: Ogres that look like tanks, Cyborgs, Blobs, Metaloids. Sound effects are digitized and harsh (you want cute, play *PacMan*), with a musical track sorta like out of a *Road Warrior* movie.

It's the first-person perspective that makes this a winner — you're squaring off head-on. Continuing their quest for graphic violence, Razorsoft includes plenty of gore, though not at your end. While the targets blow up in small explosions, the big guys are REALLY, REALLY BIG, and plenty menacing.

Fullscale animation translates into realistic motions that give the feel that you're really a bad-ass dude when you blow up an opponent and see him washed in his own blood (provided he's biological and not just metal meat to be smashed).

Having to think about which weapons to use against specific opponents, and the way ammo runs out, makes this a tougher game to win at. It's **thumbs up!** to *Death Duel*, the kind of shoot-'em-up that kicks the player into overdrive and makes him want to bite off that thumb and spit it out!

DEATH DUEL should be released in the USA in March.

Inset below: the arena crowd waits with bait-ed breath as you prepare to face off against the first opponent

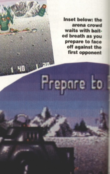
Only one regret...

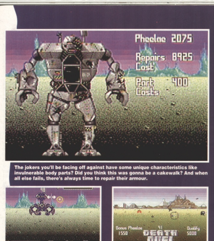
Darrin Stubbington, chief programmer, has a few things to say on *Death Duel*. 'The enemies are really big, probably the largest ever seen on a Genesis game. Take the flying dragon for instance. It's a 90K graphic, 100 pixels high. Animation runs at 60 frames a second, though there are times that we have to slow it down a bit (to 30) so as to not overtax the CPU. Genesis can do four sound samples at once, so we've loaded in 100K of them, and concentrated on sound effects of the action.'

Stubbington's only regret is that there wasn't enough time to implement some of his 'dream' concepts. 'I wanted to have small creatures 'born' out of the opponents, becoming additional enemies to fight.

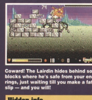
'Maybe next time,' he sighs.

Above: Krog finds the going tough, as he literally disintegrates before your eyes in a few frames of animation.





The jokers you'll be facing off against have some unique characteristics like invulnerable body parts? Did you think this was gonna be a cakewalk? And when all else fails, there's always time to repair their armour.



Coward! The Lairdin hides behind some blocks where he's safe from your energy rings, just waiting till you make a fatal slip — and you will!

Hidden info

To gain extra points — when in the Arena, shoot at the birds flying off in the distance. Just be careful your opponent isn't shooting at you in the meantime.

Some fighting hints

Trying to take on Korx Xarkton, the Xerian, won't be easy. besides, being heavily armoured, he can collapse into a floating spiked ball that's utterly impenetrable. Unlike the Krog, blowing off his legs is useless — he just switches to internal power. Best offense here is a good defense. Stay behind the walls and plan your shots carefully. Taking him on one-to-one out in the open is suicide.

Then there's the Silineum Ogre, with 76 victories under his belt. He's a real bad dude who laughs as you blast away. His vulnerable spot seems to be when he's most amused at your attempts to hurt him. This is when he sticks his head in your face. Go geddim!







Top left: Lairdin gets zapped with a well-aimed energy ring. The picture to its right shows the qualifying round screen. Below left, the Ogre's head is in flames. The only sort of weapons that can reach these parts may be obtained at one of the Weapons Shops (above), with their scratchy owners. Much nicer is the promise of the ending screen!





USA HERE 'N' NOW

Somewhere deep in the bowels of the hell that is Manhattan lurks the Palace of Gaming Doom — home of THE BLACK MARSHAL

CD-Rom wasn't built in a day

CD-ROM. That seems to say it all, meaning (supposedly) massive games of the highest quality, digitized visual and audio effects, going where no game has gone before. But has it lived up to the hype? Unfortunately, no.

Take the Turbografx here in the States. Their CD-ROM player has dropped to $299, with a few games already out there in the $69–89 price range. New ones coming out have looked promising (*Sherlock Holmes* a while back, and *The Addam's Family* on its way now), yet NEC's game console is floundering badly (can find the console and games going REAL cheap at closeout locations and job-lots).

Sign of the times — most video rental stores also do a brisk business in renting video games — even though they aren't really supposed to, with Nintendo performing a few lawsuits in a vain attempt here.

Game carts found are NES (of course), but Genesis Megadrive is a strong contender now as well — up perhaps 50% compared to last year (based on informal survey of 50 stores in the New York area, and a couple of calls to friends in California and the Midwest). No Turbografx carts though — so why expect CD-ROM?

On its way: Fester's had it — Addams Family

Let's ignore Philip's Imagination Machine for the moment, since it has yet to really hit the streets, so the only other gaming presence (we don't count IBM) is CDTV. Again, looks promising but hasn't hit the mark.

Commodore finally decided to sell the product in the main retail stores for the 'masses' — meaning us, rather than keeping it in the high-end audio and video stores. They even dropped the price some $300 dollars retail. The games look good, but are mostly just disk versions of existing Amiga stuff. No excitement here.

But CD-ROM on Genesis will be different — not from the game point of view to start, but due to marketing and information. Just as the first few games for Super NES look like pathetic pumped-up 8-bit copies, the first few CD-ROM games aren't going to throw anyone for a loop. What will make the difference is that the Sega name (like the Nintendo one) has RECOGNITION power.

Which means that companies — both licensees and otherwise — will know they can make a profit by producing a product for the CD-ROM player.

Again, we're still waiting on all of this, impatiently at best. Sega's 'official' line is that the player will be coming out in the States in the summer of '92. Yes, we've seen the prototype and different working examples. Magazines have mentioned this ad nauseum, but it remains, though, to wait for Sega to allow the final items (games) to be noted and displayed in full **(see Advance Plays, this issue)**.

And to announce a price that can be handled easily by us. $299.99 ain't bad, but it stills stings in today's economic conditions — especially when the Genesis console itself is going for under $130. Hey — they'll all make their money on the games like usual, so give us a break with the player!

Dirty rotten cheat

But now for some hardware we *can* talk about . . .

Wondering if it's going to be another case of 'Here we go again' — Camerica's Game Genie (UK version mentioned last month in Gutter Talk) is slated for a Genesis version.

Followers of the NES story will remember that Nintendo took Camerica to court for over a year, halting the appearance of the Genie in the States in the meantime (with units gathering dust in boxes stacked in a warehouse while the holidays beckoned and died, and the recession loomed over the horizon and then smashed home).

You'll want to know about Game Genie, it's a great cheat/hacking device that attaches between a cartridge and the host game console machine — to enable the entering of codes which 'open' up new powers and abilities for the gamer.

You attach a cart to it (Genie itself looks like a bit like a cart mated with a pair of suspenders), then pop the whole thing into the game console. A menu screen then pops up — and codes are entered into it

from a booklet provided.

The neat thing is that you can now change the parameters of a game, getting past difficult levels, becoming stronger than you thought possible — good stuff like that. New games just require new codes, something Camerica does as an update booklet.

Now while Nintendo thought this was a terrible thing (backing this up with a multi-million dollar lawsuit that they eventually lost), the folks at Sega are tickled Sonic the Hedgehog blue.

The Genesis version will be shown in full glory at CES/Las Vegas (from where I'll be reporting next month) — prototype form only right now. The unit's scheduled for release in the States in early spring, and is still under development.

We do know that it will be top loading, of course, and that it's being redesigned to add some additional features. Price has not yet been set either, but will probably follow the NES lead — which was a retail of $49 — so probably $59-69 here, which translates into a street price of around $55-60.

A brighter joy

Also hardware, also important, and also with buttons is Happ Industries Genesis Action controller — a replacement, or second joystick for the console.

It has a number of advantages over the plain-jane Sega controller, partly being a brighter colour scheme and a smaller shape that is almost geared for one-handed — if a bit contorted — operation. The unit also costs a tad more than the standard stick (Software Etc, in New York — Sega controller $19.99 versus Happ's at $23.95), but that also includes a button for selecting first or second player, and a nice, fat auto-fire switch (ahh!).

And Tengen two

Two newies worth noting from Tengen are *Road Blaster* and *RBI Baseball*. Neither are originals, both being translations from the arcade, and have appeared on other systems.

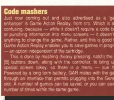
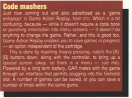
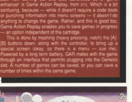
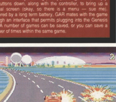
The important thing is that they're both popular and deserving to do Genesis.

Making gaming easier: Camerica (Code Masters) and their cheating Game Genie cart (left), and Happ's Competition Pro stick below

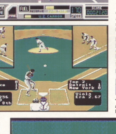
Code mashers

Just now coming out and also advertised as a 'game enhancer' is Game Action Replay, from STD. Which is a bit confusing, because — while it doesn't require a code book or punching information into menu screens — it *doesn't* do anything to change the game. Rather, and this is good too, Game Action Replay enables you to save games in progress — an option independent of the cartridge.

This is done by mashing (heavy pressing, natch) the [A]-[B] buttons down, along with the controller, to bring up a special screen (okay, so there is a menu — sue me). Powered by a long term battery, GAR mates with the game through an interface that permits plugging into the Genesis slot. A number of games can be saved, or you can save a number of times within the same game.

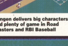
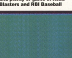







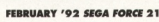


Road Blaster looks good, and works exactly as we all expect — favourite scenes being the weapons drop from above. Character representations are good, not excellent, but the importance here is fast-moving action, and plenty of sound FX signalling explosions and destruction. *Road Blaster* delivers.

The same can be said for *RBI Baseball*. Characters are nicely sized, easily viewed as is the ball itself. The multiple viewing screen makes gameplay easy, and leisurely (a part of the baseball credo).

Tengen delivers big characters and plenty of game in Road Blasters and RBI Baseball



Animation is smooth — you don't really notice and go 'Gee, what a great animation', meaning that you're concentrating on the game and not the mechanics. Sound FX are meaningless here, except perhaps for the cheer of the crowd, and the smack of the bat striking that little white ball.

Game Gear puzzler

Puzzle games seem to be the staple of the handheld LCD units, and Game Gear is no exception. Tengen's *Popils* is a good example, and worth a quick first look.

The game consists of a hero who solves puzzles in order to rescue his princess from the evil sorcerer who's imprisoned her in evermore difficult mazes, (yeh, dumb cliché but who cares?).

Blocks er, well — 'block' the way, and the hero punches, kicks, and smashes them with his fist and body (including the ever-popular head-butt). The challenge is in eliminating the blocks in just the right order to reach the princess, while accumulating the points in the process. Also to try to do it in the fewest moves.

The screens themselves make full use of the horizontal TV-like screen ratio, although the mazes are fixed and non-scrolling.

Each new screen brings another structure to conquer. Every time you smash a block, others fall down (gravity) and create a new pathway for the princess, who doesn't do much more than just wander back and forth on top or within the blocks that are trapping/encasing her.

You have to watch out for the impenetrable blocks and the Death Cones — the first can't be moved by themselves and the second kill you. Strategy is the big issue here.

A number of special features make this game more exciting. One is the Map Editor which lets you create your own puzzle designs. The other's the battery-backup built in, so that created puzzles are retained. The Gear-to-Gear cable for two-player fun can also be used for sending puzzles to the other to solve.

Animation is good, at least for the hero. When he 'punches' — a big fist appears in whichever direction the direction pad's pushed (in conjunction with the [1] button).

The blocks are colourful, and the whole screen is nicely filled. The music is pretty childish though, and one of those repetitive tunes that you can't get out of your head (but wish you could). Fortunately, there's an option to turn this off without affecting the sound FX — which are quite good and meaty.

WIN A PEPSI WALKIE TALKIE or A WWF MICROPHONE!

It ain't only software houses that can be kind and cuddly. Yeh, even the Black Marshal has a heart the colour of a coal miner's unwashed boxers, an' to prove it I've dug up some real weird radical goodies.

'Mean' Gene, the balding, pudgy, little fat guy is the head announcer and interviewer for the many star-clad rasslers of the World Wrestling Federation. Dwarfed by the likes of Hulk Hogan and the Ultimate Warrior, 'Mean' Gene still gets his point across due to his wireless-amplified microphone — which can now be yours.

Not only does the WWF electronic microphone blast out your voice, it also provides sound effects! That's right, just press on the pressure sensitive strip to hear the finest of wrestling noises — bodies slamming into the mat, face slaps, and the cheer of the crowd (plus the ever popular 'grunt' and the gong that signifies the end of the match). All digitized for as much realism as to be found in this highly-regarded American pastime. And requiring but one 9-volt battery.

Can you ask for more? Well yes you can, only this one doesn't come in a can, but in the good old-fashioned Pepsi bottle shape.

We all know that Big Brother is everywhere — so why not join him? Whether you've aspirations to being a spy or a member of the Secret Police, you'll need this super-duper hi-tech way of concealing your communication device.

Playtime's Pepsi Cola walkie talkies are a real hoot. The pair look just like regular bottles, with a 'straw' that pulls out through the bottle cap — being a whip antenna... Turn on the switch, adjust the volume, hold the bottle against your face and depress the voice switch.

Now you can communicate with your partner or headquarters with no-one being the wiser (at least no-one will think you're talking to someone, they'll just assume you're nuts). And, let's face it, when your girlfriend next asks whether that's a Pepsi bottle in your pocket or whether you're just pleased to see her, this time you can really surprise her!

There's even a rocker switch that sends a signal for Morse code practice. A 9-volt battery, sense of humour and appreciation for the unusual required.

I've got THREE of the WWF Microphones and TWO pairs of Pepsi Walkie Talkies to hurl around like they were going out of fashion. All you have to do is be first out of The Black Marshal's saddlebag with the correct answer to this simple question: ' Name the British programmer of *Death Duel*'. Answers on a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, with your name and address, to **THE BLACK MARSHAL'S SADDLEBAG, SEGA FORCE, Europress Impact, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW**, to be in no later than 24 February 1992. If you win, there's no guarantee which of the two gizmos you'll receive. Fun huh?

Promotional consideration given by Playtime Products





Tengen give Gear-to-Gear fun with Popils

EDITING R-1

Next time, tidbits from the CES show at gaudy and delightful Las Vegas, Nevada



'Kill innocent penguins and reunite Germany,' we told ADRIAN PITT. He went and got a hammer — he was right about that, at least...



Advance Play!

THE BERLIN WALL

When I heard the title I thought I was in for an afternoon playing a *Break-Out* clone. Imagine my surprise when it turned out to be a platform game, and a darn good one too!

The opening sequence of Kaneco's game is enormous, offering a detailed scenario and jolly pictures to match. Japanese isn't my strongest point, but from what I gathered, I had turned into a young lad who happens upon a rather large hole in a wall (home, no doubt —Ed).

Climbing through the hole, as you do, there's a chance meeting with a crusty old wizard who thrusts a magical mallet into your hot little hands. Okay so far, but then he commands you to venture into a land of cuddly creatures and creepy creations to bonk them on the bonce with that tool of yours, 'cos they've turned a bit nasty.

Before setting off, there's just time to decide whether or not two heads are better than one — via a Gear-to-Gear link. You can also play around with the Sound Test or if you're a wimp increase your lives and continues to the max, five and nine respectively.

Peckish penguins

Level One is set in a winter wonderland, complete with loadsa ladders and icy platforms swarming with mutant penguins. The gist is to beat holes in the ice and wait for the penguins to drop through.

As they're hanging on for dear life, clout 'em on the head! Greenpeace take note! It may sound cruel, but it's great fun. Some of the creatures simply die an agonising death, but others change into bonus objects, such as food for extra points, egg-timers to bump up that time limit and there's a dragon suit, so you can spit fireballs!

If you don't reach a penguin in time, he regains his balance and repairs the damaged platform. Watch out, too, for the tight time limit.

A barnstormin' game that's a sure-fire winner

Bonus bounty

Each level splits into five stages, at the end of which there's a door to the bonus screen. Here, you have a chance to visit the shop and buy shields, speedy boots, extra lives and continues using money earnt previously.

You can also bop through a sub-game to play, a one-screen platform and ladders affair, eating cakes for bonus points till they come out ya ear 'oles!

Having completed that little lot, it's time to face tof against the end-of-level boss. There's a giant king penguin to biff ten thousand times, and later on a humungous hedgehog — an uncuddly relation of Sonic's perhaps — who rolls himself into a ball and zooms around the screen. They're a tough challenge and many precious lives can be lost here

Subsequent levels follow the same format, although the backgrounds, monsters and structure of platforms change. Avoid death from malevolent bouncing blobs who leap over the holes you've dug and beware the spiky-haired aliens on the planet level. Those meanies get bigger, faster and many need more than one bonk before they pop their clogs!

With its cute graphics, superb animation, jolly tunes and extra incentives, like the shop and the bonus games, *The Berlin Wall* will have you coming back for more. It has that 'let's just see what the next stage looks like' element and is a sure-fire winner.

t's not often that you find a barnstormin' game with oodles of character, playability and addictivity, *The Berlin Wall* has all three and lots, lots more. Although quite what it's got to do with reuniting Germany, I don't know! Better off calling it *Adrian's Wall*, don't you reckon?!! **ADE**

Time to bang old Pengy's bonce. Hold on very tight now!

Watch those red and green 'uns, they tend to get a trifle nasty!

What a lovely title screen!

Ice, Ice baby! Give it some 'ammer young man. We love a good bash!

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INVADERS
次スの!

SUPER SPACE INVADERS

MASTER SYSTEM ms

Reviewed!

Never since Custer has a stand been so futile — and now the aliens are smarter, better armed and meaner. STUART WYNNE's terrified, but brave...

Space Invaders may arouse all the excitement of a Metro 0.1 nowadays, and a remixed version can't be *that* good can it? The *Space Invader* essentials are the same as they've ever been. One or two players control guns which move left/right across the bottom of the screen, trading laser bolts with the descending aliens. The guns still can't move forward, but can collect spanking brand-new hardware released by shooting a UFO which flies across the top of the screen.

There's a spectacular Fire Flower smart bomb, four laser beams which bounce around the screen, a hyper laser that knocks out a whole row of aliens and a vertical laser that fires upwards, erasing all the aliens in its way. Other goodies include rapid-fire and a collectible which gives you some much needed bases to hide behind!



Whirligig xenos

The game's structured in 12 levels, each with its own stunning backdrop, some of which scroll! But there's no time to ogle — the relentless alien attack begins immediately.

There are three Attack Waves in each level, with over a dozen different ways of attacking, from the standard left/right then descend march to a swirling, circular 'polar' attack. The alien ships vary substantially and some of them expand when hit!

All these ships are shown in a great little booklet which comes with the package, enhancing superlative in-game presentation. It also has drawings of the super-monsters or Guardians. There are three of these described, and very mean they look too, but they're just as good onscreen: nicely drawn, quick moving, well animated — and very tough!

Getting through to these monsters is a real graphical treat and the only problemo is that there are not more of them! When you complete a level you either get one of these monsters to defeat, or the hilarious Cattle Mutilation screen where flying saucers nip down to carry off cattle! You must defend the moo-moos for loadsa bonus points, but fortunately you can't die on this bonus screen!

Invasion routes

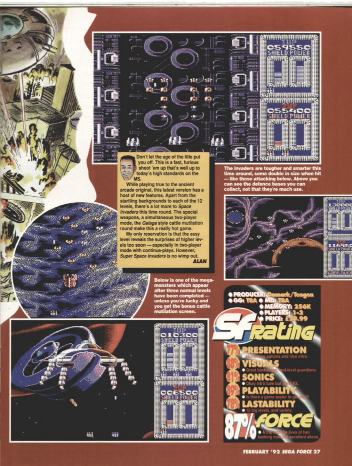
Should all the variety of alien hardware still not be enough for you, hold on to your socks because the new restyled *Invaders* also offers you a choice of how to progress through the levels. After each Guardian or Cattle Mutilation screen you get a choice of which level to attempt next. This adds much needed variety.

In short, *Super Space Invaders* is amazing. The game really has been hit by lightning, becoming a hugely playable update, superbly converted. A classic game, great in one-player mode and even better as a two-player — Domark have started '92 in astonishingly good style!





The new, remixed Space Invaders comes with Shield and Power bars, energized by collecting power-ups dropped by the Flying Saucer which crosses at the top of the screen.



Don't let the age of the title put you off. This is a fast, furious shoot 'em up that's well up to today's high standards on the MS.

While playing true to the ancient arcade original, this latest version has a host of new features. Apart from the startling backgrounds to each of the 12 levels, there's a lot more to *Space Invaders* this time round. The special weapons, a simultaneous two-player mode, the *Galaga* style cattle mutilation round make this a really hot game.

My only reservation is that the easy level reveals the surprises of higher levels too soon — especially in two-player mode with continue-plays. However, *Super Space Invaders* is no wimp out.

ALAN

The invaders are tougher and smarter this time around, some double in size when hit — like those attacking below. Above you can see the defence bases you can collect, not that they're much use.

Below is one of the mega-monsters which appear after three normal levels have been completed — unless you're lucky and you get the bonus cattle mutilation screen.

- PRODUCER: Domark/Tengen
- GG: TBA
- MD: TBA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1-2
- PRICE: £29.99

SF Rating

77% PRESENTATION
- Numerous options and nice intro.

88% VISUALS
- Great backdrops, end-level guardians.

81% SONICS
- Okay intro tune but great FX.

89% PLAYABILITY
- Is there a game easier to get into?

78% LASTABILITY
- 12 big levels, and variety.

87% FORCE
- A trip into the lives of two barking mad but excellent aliens.





Get in the ring, mutha, the world's dirtiest beat-'em-up is UK official and PAUL MELLERICK gives it a right good kicking.

Reviewed!

PIT FIGHTER

After last month's exclusive Advance Play, it's good to find the UK game is such a stormin' beat-'em-up. The answer to the question on everyone's bruised lips, whether the Mega Drive can really do arcade Pit-Fighter justice is… yes!

Atari's coin-op caught the imagination of the arcade-going public when launched, due to the fact that the main characters and indeed the crowds were real. Digitized sound and digitized graphics of real people added an original touch of realism. You could watch somebody wince in real life when a character was hit.

The Mega Drive version sadly drops the 3-D scaling, no longer does your character's size vary as he moves into/out of the screen, but this small sacrifice does not detract from gameplay and the sprites are identical to the coin-op's apart from scaling. Sound is equally impressive and make for a superb sense of atmosphere.

BUZZ OFF

As you will know from last issue (if not where were you? get a back issue now!) you can play a choice of three characters; Buzz, Kato and Ty. Each has their own special attack move, which must be mastered to work your way through the ten levels between you and the Masked Warrior.

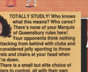
You battle against different foes each increasingly more powerful. However you've got three continue-plays and veteran fighters won't, unfortunately, find the game that difficult to complete.

One nice touch is how various objects lying around the arena can be picked up and thrown, although as in the coin-op they can appear to float in your hands. Also available are Power Pills which appear when you smash an object — pick one up and you become twice as powerful.

The gameplay itself is very good, providing lots of furious action and it is very satisfying flooring an opponent and kicking them while they are still down! The number of opponents is a bit small, but that is a problem in the arcade machine as well. Overall the game is great fun to play, not too easy and will give a good amount of enjoyment. The only serious flaw is the price, which is hard to justify — especially with much cheaper grey imports. **PAUL**



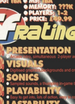


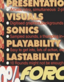


TOTALLY STUDLY! Who knows what this means? Who cares? There's none of your Marquis of Queensbury rules here! Your opponents think nothing of attacking from behind with clubs and it's considered jolly sporting to throw barrels and chairs at your head when you're down.

There is a small but elite choice of fighters to control, all with their own unique moves. Ty was my personal favourite, his special move being to fling his opponent across the fighting area!

The cheering and jeering crowd certainly add to the enjoyment of the game. They seem to have a mind of their own and join in by throwing the fighters back into the ring — bloodthirsty lot! This game is a lot of fun even if you consider yourself to be a pacifist, it'll have you shouting 'Got you! You nasty critter!' in no time. ***CLAIRE***





- PRODUCER: DOMARK/TENGEN
- GG: TBA
- MS: TBA
- MEMORY: ???K
- PLAYERS: 1-2
- PRICE: £49.99

SF Rating

92% PRESENTATION
- Arcade intro, simultaneous 2-player action

90% VISUALS
- Digitised graphics,backgrounds and crowds

92% SONICS
- Sampled sounds, a thumping in-game tune

92% PLAYABILITY
- Easy to get into, lots of action, easy to control

75% LASTABILITY
- 10 Rounds might not be enough for experts

90% FORCE
- A great conversion tweaked to play better than the arcade

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Reviewed!

RUNNING BATT

It's another run-'n'-shoot blaster. But is it bigger, better, meaner than the rest? CLAIRE MORLEY does what a woman's gotta do...

The Dark Zone, was once a normal town, filled with life and activity, but then the dreaded M arrived and turned it into an utter wasteland (Ludlow, you mean? — Ed) But worry not readers, this isn't a Sesame Street out-take, M is a fiendish villain with a full quota of mindless soldiers in his employ at the Zone's HQ (EuroPress Towers? — Ed).

Stories of disturbances and disappearances went around like wildfire (a bit like after the staff party!) and soon reached the ears of the police (it *is* the staff party — Ed). Anyway, Sgt. Brody went investigating and failed to return home for tea. Cue Sgt. Gray, Brody's partner, who went searching and found him lying outside the Dark Zone, fatally wounded.

"Hyptonist...M.." his last words. I think he meant Hypnotist, but let's not be too picky. Gray knew at once that he must avenge the death of his friend, and rid the town madness. It's payback time!

M for mystery

You must battle — and run — through five stages of fierce street-fighting. Your ultimate aim is to defeat M, but he has an endless supply of demented soldiers, who get smarter on each level, and there's your regular end-level super-baddie challenging you to one-to-one combat.

On the plus side there's loadsa pick-'em-ups; a pistol (30 bullets), rifle (10 rounds), extra energy, Super Suit (improved attack 'n' defence capabilities), plus extra lives and 5-second invincibility (with improves speed and agility). The last two will be hidden, meaning you have to destroy something to expose them. It's also important to remember our macho hero isn't that smart; he can only carry one weapon so a pistol with shots remaining will be dropped when you pick up a rifle.

Stage One features one of the many hideouts of the Soldiers of Darkness, which aren't too difficult to defeat — one bullet does the trick! Captain Blass (looking rather like a Ninja Turtle) waits for you at the end of the stage, he's a bit of a fatty, but still dangerous — keep low and attack them from a crouch.

The game is instantly playable and addictive

Beware of the wall-mounted guns and electric shocks on Stage Two, where the soldiers are that much more difficult to kill. Killer the Kid reminds me of Freddie Kreuger, a nasty piece of work he'll shoot you dead given half a chance! Try and have a couple of lives left for him.

Stage Three's soldiers greet you with grenades, and watch out for robots! Get through this and you'll come face to face with Samurai Man, who resorts to magic if you manage to avoid his sword. The enemies which were previously easy-peasy are becomingly increasingly difficult to beat. The difficulty curve is in fact nicely judged, hazards such electric shocks and lazors add to the problems, but as you get five options to continue, it's not too frustrating to be beaten as it only means that you go back to the beginning of the level, not the whole game.

Using continues Level Four isn't massively difficult to reach, and once there you'll find a mysterious room with a switch on the wall. Pull the switch and go on in... Level Five is M's special treat just for you!

M for murder

Once the first screen appears you'll notice the good clear quality of the graphics. Gray is a nicely animated sprite who responds well, and is very controllable. It is a good idea to perfect the technique of 'jumpkicking', as this is much more effective than punching in hand-to-hand combat. Watch out for the gaps between platforms, always a little wider than they appear!

The game is instantly playable, and addictive. Simple controls and a relatively simple task makes the core of the game (punching, kicking and shooting) very enjoyable. The sound quality is very clear, especially the rifle crack! The gameplay isn't all that varied, but it's very enjoyable and extremely playable.

CLAIRE



Despite what Paul says, with practice the high kick can be very effective so long as your timing is good. The enemy on the left is virtually dead.

What an original game design, horizontally scrolling, one player, jump & kick, pick up guns etc. — this game is about as original as a Russ Abbot sketch! But monotonous play is not the only bad point, tricky collision detection and awkward graphics, play a part too. Whilst the backgrounds are reasonable, and the sound okay, the game does not play particularly well. Levels are long, but lack variety and going back to the start when 'continuing' play is frustrating. The end-level villains are also disappointing, small and unimaginative, only the backgrounds impress. This isn't a bad game, merely mediocre and with little to appeal to veterans such as myself. Newcomers like Claire could get some enjoyment though (and reach higher levels! — Ed).

PAUL

End-level baddies may be on the small side, but Captain Blass is certainly mean. Crouch low and punch!

Samurai Man uses Oriental cunning to disappear and reappear for lethal sword attacks at the end of Level Three.

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: TBA
- MD: TBA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £29.99

SF RATING

68% PRESENTATION
- Text intro and five-continue plays

71% VISUALS
- Crisp graphics handicapped by flicker

65% SONICS
- Strangely wistful music but good FX

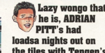
72% PLAYABILITY
- Easy to start violent action

62% LASTABILITY
- Ultimately rather repetitive

69% FORCE
- Competent but unoriginal blaster

KLAX

Reviewed!



Lazy wongo that he is, ADRIAN PITT's had loadsa nights out on the tiles with Tengen's glitzy update of Connect Four

K*lax* has been around a while in various versions — the recent UK Mega Drive version was almost arcade-perfect and a damn sight better than the previously available import version. What's its success? It's simple, yet *so* addictive!

Drop several rectangular tiles of the same colour in a row. Is that it? A sinch, eh? Of course not! Are things *EVER* that easy?

As in other versions, the MS game's played on a sloping conveyer belt, which is big, bold and colourful. The game screen's nicely laid out, uncluttered and easy on the eye. There's even an option to change the tile colours if you find them too confusing or garish for your liking, and the speed of the paddle used to catch the tiles can be altered, too.

Once you catch a tile it's dropped in the 'bin'. This is the place where you make your klaxs. The knack is to know when to drop the tiles, where to drop them, when to store them in your paddle (up to five at a time), or whether there's time to flick a tile back up the conveyer and catch it at a more convenient moment.

You really have to keep your wits about you, 'cos if you miss a tile it falls to a fiery grave. The Drop Meter keeps count — too many missed tiles and the game ends. Fortunately, for a klutz like me, the Drop Meter can be turned off on the options screen! This means the only way you can die is if the bin fills up. But you ain't a wimp like me...

Wave survival

But it's not only a case of making klaxs hither and thither. In each round of the game — or wave — you're given a particular challenge to get your teeth into. You may have to make three or more klaxs before the wave ends, or specifically produce three or more diagonals. Or maybe survive 40 or more tiles, or perhaps score ten thousand or more points.

The combinations of klaxs you can make are almost endless. The more intricate patterns come with a lot of skill and practice — see if you can get to a Warp Level! There's an immense feeling of satisfaction simply when you complete a wave, and with over a 100 to complete there's plenty of challenge.

The further you progress, the more and faster the tiles and the tougher the requirement for completing the level. One incentive for pounding the old joypad, besides, points is change of backdrop every few levels; jungles, space scapes and even car parks all make a pleasant change of scene.

Mega Vs Master

Sadly there's not as much sound on the Master System, none of the sympathetic expostulations, screams or cheers of the MD version, and the audience have forgotten to clap this time around. But there are plenty of spot FX and an in-game tune (which gets on your nerves after a bit!). I miss the sense of menace created by the tile noises of the MD version, but overall the sonics aren't too bad. Most importantly game speed hasn't suffered, play still gets fast and furious!

An immense satisfaction when you complete a wave

The MS version also comes with a full range of options. I like the choice at the game's start, whether to begin on level one, six or eleven. Then whenever you complete five levels, you're again given a choice of three levels to continue from. Also there are three credits — lives really — but if you lose them you can continue-play indefinitely, although your score is reset to zero every time you use a continue-play.

But however you play, *Klax* is perfect proof that you don't have to spend all day slaughtering aliens to have a good time! Simplicity equals addictivity where *Klax* is concerned. If roof tiling was this addictive I'd start my own business tomorrow! Don't be a square, play *Klax* if you dare!!

Tile we meet again

projecTILE: Device Big Stu puts under our chairs when the work ain't flowing!

infanTILE: Most of the staff writers on SEGA FORCE!

inferTILE: Most of the staff writers on SEGA FORCE!!!!!

repTILE: Cold-blooded, air breathing vertebrate, with horny scales or plates. (Sounds like Paul! —Ed).

hosTILE: The reaction we get from a software house when we give their game a bad mark!

fuTILE: Trying to get me to do any work on a Friday afternoon!

sTILE: Found in hedgerows, handy if you ever feel the need to get your leg over...

Catching the klax

What exactly *is* a klax? Good question! It's a group of three or more tiles of the same colour placed in either a diagonal, horizontal or vertical row. By positioning your tiles carefully before dropping them, you can make a klax, or a combination of klaxs, whichever you're clever enough to execute.

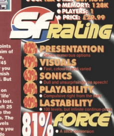
There are different point values for the different klaxs you manage to produce. For example, a vertical row of three earns 50 points, a horizontal row 1,000 points and a diagonal row 5,000.

The astute can get four or even five tiles in a row. A line of four is the equivalent to two klaxs and five in a row equivalent to three klaxs. It's possible to put diagonals with horizontals, horizontals with verticals, produce star shapes, pyramid shapes and so on. The more complicated the klaxs are, the more points you achieve.

To begin with the tiles come down all orderly and polite, one by one, but just you wait — they soon start mobbing you, stacks and stacks of tiles rushing at you like kids at home time!



Above points are the aim of the game, score 4745 however you like to finish the level. But the drop meter is on and one 'life' has been lost. On the left 25 klaxs are the objective. The worst levels are where you have to do diagonals.





MEGA DRIVE md

MOBO-

-ROBO!

Reviewed!

BONANZA

Are the Bonanza Bros Sega's Laurel & Hardy, or just a couple of stooges? ADRIAN PITT investigates...

It has to be said, there's nothing really that original about *Bonanza Brothers* — apart from the well peculiar graphics of the Bros themselves! *BB* is basically another run around, collect objects and shoot anything that gets in your way. But the simplest, most well-used ideas often produce the best games and *Bonanza Bros* is certainly a lot of fun.

Robo and Mobo, the Bros, are supposedly hardened criminals, thieves and burglars of the worst sort, but we all have a devious streak inside us and through them we're allowed to plunder willy nilly through a varied assortment of buildings, nicking booty by the sack load. This is a Sega game though, so it's all for a good cause — the two thugs have been enlisted by the local Badville rozzers to check out a local man's businesses.

The police know that his casino is rigged and the mint produces counterfeit money, but they need proof. Robo and Mobo must race as quickly as they can through each of the ten locations, which include a department store, a laboratory and a pyramid (?!), collecting damaging pieces of evidence, (money bags, safes, briefcases and the like) that will eventually land this shady character in jail. Hopefully, if they do a good job, Badville will become Goodville overnight and the police will forgive the Bros for being naughty boys. If however, brotherly love isn't all it's cracked up to be and the two blokes make a hash of the job, the Old Bill might just think about taking a peek at the two brothers' criminal records. And they 'ain't a pretty sight!

Both versions move along at quite a pace

Sacks of credit

Both the MD and MS games play and look almost identical. The graphics in both are crisp, colourful and nicely shaded. Animation of the characters is adequate, but then this ain't a furious beat-'em-up, so what there is in the animation department is pretty nifty. Watch as the two guys fling their swag bags over their shoulders and attempt to look mean and hard.

The two versions move along at quite a pace, the scrolling is fast and incredibly smooth. Each have a great front end to them, with a fair amount of options. In the MD game, you can choose the level of difficulty and how many lives per credit, (up to seven lives per four credits). The MS game offers five lives per credit and the option to change the time limit. You're allowed three minutes to complete each level, however in the MS game, this can be raised to six minutes.

If trundling round the locations all gets a bit too much and wildly confusing, there's a handy map on screen, showing your present location, the whereabouts of each item to be collected and the route to the exit. (Press pause on the MS to access the map).

Rotund villains

Each version has its own plus points. For example, the Master System game has a bonus stage to complete after levels 2, 4 and 7. This involves leaping on a series of platforms, collecting bags of dosh, whilst avoiding crosshairs that swirl around the screen. This sub-game isn't included in the MD version. Even so, Mega Drive *Bonanza Brothers* definitely has the edge over its little brother. Basically, because the 16-bit game offers a two-player option, with you and a friend helping each other out in the split-screen world of deceit and skullduggery. In the MS game Robo is an only child!

The MD game is more of a challenge too. The security men, who's job it is to guard the



The MD game boasts a simultaneous two-player option. Above the Bros escape from the scene of their latest break-in via a nice, unobtrusive Zeppelin.

Grab the gold before the crosshairs put a permanent parting in your hairstyle.

Robbing the Mint, all for the good of community security. Guards are dealt with by dropping massive flippin' weights on them! Are the police really going to approve?

- MASTER SYSTEM VERSION
- PRODUCER: SEGA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £29.99

SF Rating

82% PRESENTATION
- Nice options, useless level time change

85% VISUALS
- Smart, clear and close to the coin-op

77% SONICS
- Irritating tunes, mumbled speech

83% PLAYABILITY
- Illegality always gets the heart thumping

82% LASTABILITY
- Addictive but maybe slightly easy

80% FORCE
- Good conversion and great to play



While one Bros languishes in gaol, the other battles it out with a bomb throwing Meanie. Any Treasure still meeded is shown flashing on the map (Right)

The Bros jump from rooftop to rooftop on the casino job. Armoured guards are tough to deal with, you must shoot them in the backto avoid your bullets bouncing off their shields.

While one Bros admires himself in a hand mirror waiting for the escape balloon, the other fights armoured guards.

Comparing the MS and MD versions was not easy, but then also comparing these to the coin-op, well my work never stops! But enough, on to the games, both are great fun to play and have good graphics, with the sound being slightly disappointing on the MS and the first six levels being rather too easy. After that the game does get tougher and it won't be a push over to complete! However the MD version has the edge, not because of graphics which are fairly close, but mainly because of the simultaneous two-player option which provides just that bit more fun. The pace of the game is fast and the characters are a joy to control. If you're a *Bonanza Bros* fan buy the MD version now, and give the MS version a whirl too. This isn't a barnstormer of a game, just fun and amusing. **PAUL**

loot, are slightly harder to handle and there are more of 'em. There are also rather rotund-looking bad guys who have a fetish for throwing bombs plus hazards such as drinks cans and garden rakes lying around, just waiting to trip up bungling burglars.

By contrast the MS version is rather too easy, I reached level six on my first play! — and in some style too, raising the time limit to six minutes seems rather pointless as each level is completed fairly quickly. The only advantage in having an extended limit is you get a huge time bonus at the end of the level!

Arcade perfection

As an arcade machine conversion, the game has been transferred well to both consoles and if you are familiar with the coin-op you will enjoy this, with both the MS & MD providing great playability with tongue—in—cheek graphics and sound. As ever, two-player mode is great fun and deciding who does what in a break-in adds human and tactical interest — especially if your plonker partner (ie Paul) is always needing to be helped out! The MS version sadly lacks this element, although the mini-game is some compensation as are impressive graphics. If the thought of sneaking through well guarded establishments at night — in the service of improved security, of course — is appealing, then this original, playable and not overly difficult game is well worth considering. **ADE**

● MEGA DRIVE VERSION ● GG: TBA
● PRODUCER: SEGA
● MEMORY: 512K
● PLAYERS: 2-2
● PRICE: £34.99

SF RATING

64% **PRESENTATION**
● Good options, great loading screens

66% **VISUALS**
● Identical coin-op graphics, nice shading

63% **SONICS**
● Tuneful little ditties and nice speech

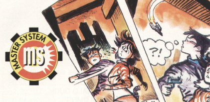
64% **PLAYABILITY**
● Easy to get into, addictine and tough

63% **LASTABILITY**
● Will still be around in a few months

64% **FORCE**
● Better than the MS version and very good anyway



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Reviewed!

G-LOC

AIR BATTLE

Afterburner II in all but name, this straps you into the F-14 for one more tussle with enemy fighters. ALAN GREEN reports from the danger zone...

'Loss of consciousness through G-force' is the inspiration behind the title of this new arcade flight sim on the Master System. Fortunately this loss of consciousness does not come in the game itself — it's not that boring! Merely a fairly straight-forward pilot's eye-view of air combat.

The game is set in the near future, when endless war has led to military forces taking control from civilian governments. The largest and most powerful of these independent forces is the CDF (Citizens Defence Force), who have raided government installations and accrued a massive army in air, sea and ground forces.

The UN have gone completely bonkers about this and decided to unleash their 'Thunderfox' fighters — the hottest thing in the skies, but as yet untested!

Foxy features

G-LOC is no flight simulator, but there a few simlike options. You can upgrade through numerous Thunderfox models (all with varying features), a choice of machine-guns and auto-locking missiles, a damage level meter and other such realistic fighter features. You also get the chance to restock your plane and select new terrains between attacks from enemy forces, adding a degree of strategy to the game.

Basically though it's an arcade style 3-D shoot-'em-up. The flight screen is impressive, with a great number of enemy targets shooting by as the ground rushes beneath your plane. But you'll not be able to loop the loop or even turn that much, it's just straight action until you've wiped out the wave of enemy attack. There is a radar showing approaching enemy fighters, and this must be used to either avoid trouble or bring them directly into your own sights. But there's no map of the territory flown over and each enemy that appears is 'gone' completely once it's left the immediate area around your jet.

Targets approach thick and fast, leaving a trail of fire

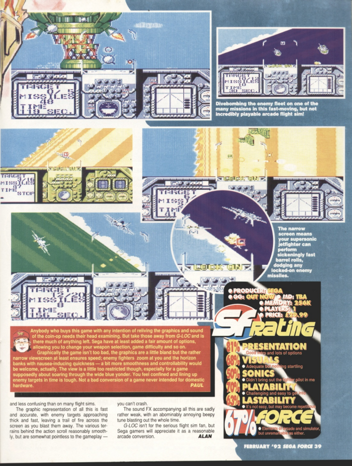
Behind you

These things considered it's a pretty fast and challenging blast, although it's somewhat repetitive. Battling it out over various land, sea, and desert scenes (all with that distant mountain range in the distance) you must pick off waves of enemy fighters, tanks, warships, and home bases.

Each wave is separate, your mission being to destroy a certain number of the enemy within a certain amount of time. There's a mass of information displayed in the cockpit at the base of the screen, including time, hits (and hits still required), missiles left, the radar, the level indicator and other useful/vital info.

There's also a Heads-Up-Display indicating when your missiles are locked on target. Using this vast numbers of enemy units can be destroyed, but your missile supply is limited so some caution is needed. Not that the trigger happy will be too disappointed, your machine gun can fire away all the time.

One interesting feature is the under-attack sequence. Rather than simply hearing the explosions of your plane getting attacked from behind and being wiped out in complete confusion and ignorance, you actually get to view of your own jet from behind enabling you to see the enemy fire and accordingly dodge the oncoming missiles.This makes battling it out a lot more fun



Divebombing the enemy fleet on one of the many missions in this fast-moving, but not incredibly playable arcade flight sim!

The narrow screen means your supersonic jetfighter can perform sickeningly fast barrel rolls, dodging any locked-on enemy missiles.

Anybody who buys this game with any intention of reliving the graphics and sound of the coin-op needs their head examining. But take those away from *G-LOC* and is there much of anything left. Sega have at least added a fair amount of options, allowing you to change your weapon selection, game difficulty and so on.

Graphically the game isn't too bad, the graphics are a little bland but the rather narrow viewscreen at least ensures speed; enemy fighters zoom at you and the horizon banks with nausea-inducing quickness — a bit more smoothness and controllability would be welcome, actually. The view is a little too restricted though, especially for a game supposedly about soaring through the wide blue yonder. You feel confined and lining up enemy targets in time is tough. Not a bad conversion of a game never intended for domestic hardware. **PAUL**

and less confusing than on many flight sims.

The graphic representation of all this is fast and accurate, with enemy targets approaching thick and fast, leaving a trail of fire across the screen as you blast them away. The various terrains behind the action scroll reasonably smoothly, but are somewhat pointless to the gameplay — you can't crash.

The sound FX accompanying all this are sadly rather weak, with an abominably annoying beepy tune blasting out the whole time.

G-LOC isn't for the serious flight sim fan, but Sega gamers will appreciate it as a reasonable arcade conversion. **ALAN**

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: OUT NOW ● MD: TBA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £29.99

SF Rating

81% PRESENTATION
- Good intro and lots of options

68% VISUALS
- Adequate but nothing startling

50% SONICS
- Didn't bring out the fighter pilot in me

70% PLAYABILITY
- Challenging and easy to get into

63% LASTABILITY
- It's not easy, but may become repetitious

67% FORCE
- Elements of arcade and simulator, but unremarkable as either.



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Those extremely generous people at *Special Reserve* are giving the set away. The lucky dude who wins will also receive a Scart lead and free, yes FREE membership to the *Special Reserve Games Club*.

When you become a member of this elite team, you'll get sent six copies per year of their swank and trendy, 24-page, full-colour mag "NRG". It's brimful with reviews of the latest software and hardware and contains oodles and oodles of tips. You can also get loads of those up to the minute games you've longed for at a knock down price! A great package indeed and if the trusty SEGA FORCE abacus serves me well, this little box of booty is worth well over £185!

Not content with that, ten runners-up will each revel in the delights of a Teqniche Turbo Rapid-fire joypad and be initiated for 12 months as a member of the *SR Games Club*. If you'd like to find out how jolly the folk at *Special Reserve* really are, give 'em a bell on (0279) 600204, they'll be happy to supply you with further info on the *Games Club* and details of their range of hardware and software.

1. What's the name of the king who's touch turned everything to GOLD?
A) Jonathan
B) Phil
C) Midas

2. Which animal depicts the STAR sign Aries?
A) a goat
B) a ram
C) a bull

3. Who's famed for inventing TELEVISION?
A) Alexander Graham Bell
B) John Logi-Baird
C) Esther Rantzen

SO, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO?

Good question! Maybe recite the whole of "Baa Baa Black Sheep" with a deckchair in your mouth, or eat three cream crackers with a glass of water on your head? No! Nothing as easy as that! Just answer the three well 'ard questions, which took several days to cook up and send them to: *SPECIAL RESERVE COMPETITION, SEGA FORCE, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW, to arrive no later than 20 February. Good luck!*



the PITT STOP Playing Tips!

Down in the darkest part of Game-Freak Alley, ADRIAN PITT's henchmen are ripping off bits and pieces from all the best Sega games going. So if you need patching up or an illicit infinite-life spare, just pull up at the kerb on the right-hand side...

STOP RIGHT THERE! Don't turn another page! Don't move another muscle! I'm about to divulge another set of grizzly, fiendish secrets to help you through the weird, whacky and wonderful gutters of Game-athon city.

Today the **PITT STOP** chair, that throne among thrones, that seat among seats, has gone in for a service — dodgy indicators and trouble with the cistern. They've given me a monkey-wrench instead and told to get on with it!

RoboCod and **Quackshot** feature strongly i this month's bag of booty, along with **John Madden '92** and **Decapattack,** to name a few.

Keep those tips a-comin', gaming dead-heads — check out the box below to see what you could win for best tips, maps and chip butties. Besides, I gotta keep chucking the odd sackful of letters on the old fire in the corner, there's a distinct lack of draught excluders in this workshop.

£150-worth of software to be won!

It's not all cheating at the **PITT STOP** workshop. Each month **THREE** schmucky-lucky gamesters will win a **£50 SEGA FORCE** cartridge voucher each for the best hints and tips they send me. And I'm always on the look-out for big, colourful maps for those of you who are cartographers (people obsessed with knowing where they are). So get crackin'.

This month I've selected three voucher winners — Robert Peterson of Crosby, Liverpool for a whole bunch of tips from **MS Action Fighter** to **MS Zillion 2**, Martin Morrison of Ayreshire for getting tangled up with **MD Spiderman**, and Paul Reed of Leicester for **MD Quackshot** and **Decapattack.**

It could be YOU next month! Send tips on your favourite MD, MS or GG games to: PITT STOP, SEGA FORCE, Europress Impact, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

THE PITT STOP WORKSHOP

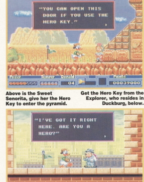
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Tips

QUACK SHOT

This has to be one of the prettiest and most visually imaginative games on the Mega Drive. PAUL MELLERICK shows you not only how to complete this Megablaster, but also picks out some graphic high-spots.



Above is the Sweet Senorita, give her the Hero Key to enter the pyramid.

Get the Hero Key from the Explorer, who resides in Duckburg, below.

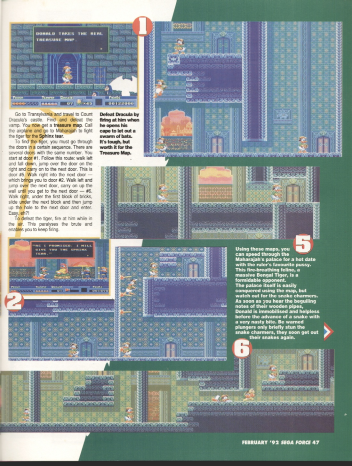
If this game's driving you ape— (I thought we were using the quackers quip here? —Big Ed), here's a rather hefty solution to solve old 'nunky Donald's dilemmas — hints on what to collect, where to collect them, and most importantly, *when* to use them. Take it away **P Mellerick** and **Paul Reed** of **Leicester**.

From Duckburg, travel across town to the explorer, call the airplane and go to Mexico. Cross the desert to meet the Sweet Senorita.

Call the airplane and go to Duckburg and collect the **Hero key** from the explorer, then travel to Mexico and use the key to open the door. Travel through the ruins till you meet Goofy, who gives you a note and a **red plunger**, which allows you to climb walls.

Use the note, which reads *1 SUN 2 MOON 3 STAR*. This will become clear later. Travel back the way you came and call the airplane back to Duckburg.

Using the red plunger, travel up the wall on the right and onto the rooftops and power lines of Duckburg. This brings you to Gyro, who gives you the **bubble gum gun**. Work your way back to the flag and call the airplane.



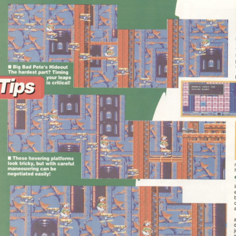
Go to Transylvania and travel to Count Dracula's castle. Find and defeat the vamp. You now get a **treasure map**. Call the airplane and go to Maharajah to fight the tiger for the **Sphinx tear**.

To find the tiger, you must go through the doors in a certain sequence. There are several doors with the same number. You start at door #1. Follow this route: walk left and fall down, jump over the door on the right and carry on to the next door. This is door #5. Walk right into the next door — which brings you to door #2. Walk left and jump over the next door, carry on up the wall until you get to the next door — #6. Walk right, under the first block of bricks, slide under the next block and then jump up the hole to the next door and enter. Easy, eh?!

To defeat the tiger, fire at him while in the air. This paralyses the brute and enables you to keep firing.

Defeat Dracula by firing at him when he opens his cape to let out a swarm of bats. It's tough, but worth it for the Treasure Map.

Using these maps, you can speed through the Maharajah's palace for a hot date with the ruler's favourite pussy. This fire-breathing feline, a massive Bengal Tiger, is a formidable opponent. The palace itself is easily conquered using the map, but watch out for the snake charmers. As soon as you hear the beguiling notes of their wooden pipes, Donald is immobilised and helpless before the advance of a snake with a very nasty bite. Be warned plungers only briefly stun the snake charmers, they soon get out their snakes again.



Tips

■ **Big Bad Pete's Hideout The hardest part? Timing your leaps is critical!**

■ **These hovering platforms look tricky, but with careful maneouvring can be negotiated easily!**



Egypt and ice

Travel to Egypt and use the Sphinx tear to open the door. Once inside the pyramid, take the short cut from the ladder, climb up to the top, then continue up to the secret room. Now go up again, then left across the flaming pits.

When you get to the tiled floor where the roof comes down, use the note Goofy gave you — it's the sequence you need to jump on the tiles to stop the roof falling in. Go up and collect the **Sceptre of Ra** and climb down the ladder to the minecart.

Go to the Viking ship and continue till you reach the mast. Go up to the crow's nest. Talk to the Viking and set your flag. Now call the airplane and go to the South Pole.

Find the frozen key and use the Sceptre of Ra to smash the ice. Go back to the Viking ship, use the Viking key to go into the ship and travel to the centre, where there's a door. This takes you to the Viking ghost. To kill him you must fire at his head when he lowers his shield. Execute a small jump and fire. This is the only way to kill him, so be patient!

After defeating the ghostie, talk to the Viking again. He tells you he doesn't have the Viking diary, but will give you a **green plunger**. This allows you to hang onto birds (watch the expression on Donald's face!).

Go to the South Pole and stick to the birds passing by, then jump across the icebergs. Fall down into the ice and work your way around the ice blocks (the pink ones can't be destroyed). Find the **Viking diary** and get out!

Pete comes along and shows you he's kidnapped Huey, Dewey and Louie, holding them to ransom for the diary and treasure map. Give them to him (I'd rather have a treasure map than nephews!) and set off to find them at Pete's hideout.

The hideout

In the hideout, you must reach the hovering, expanding platforms. This looks hard but can be negotiated if taken in the following order: onto the first, then down to the next, then up and jump onto the platform.

Next fall down onto one, then down again and up onto the platform. Jump across then down. This is the last platform but you can't jump the gap. You must stand on the bottom platform when expanded and fire a plunger then quickly jump up to the expanded top platform and jump. You won't make the gap but land on the plunger then jump up to the platform.

Go right till you meet Pete and he offers to give you everything if you defeat him. Easy! Kill the other baddies in the room using the bubble gum gun, then follow Pete around in his ship. Fire at him several times and he dies. Take the diary, stand on the middle platform and use it. Donald dips the map in the water and it shows the treasure island.

Go to the island, travel across the scenery and fall down the far hole, breaking the tiles as you fall. Keep walking left and dashing, otherwise you fall down. Carry on until you reach the exploding branches growing out of the wall. Jump quickly to the top and walk right.

This brings you to the invincible bridge. As you jump, a brick appears, which you must land on. This is very tricky and needs a lot of practice.

Past the bridge you bump into the final guardian. To kill him, dodge the sword he throws and stick a plunger to the wall. When the bricks fall down, stay on the wall then quickly fire at him before the sword comes back. (This is VERY HARD!!)

Happy plungering, folks!

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '92

Our faithful friend, **P Mellerick**, strikes again, this time with some big and beefy tips for that excellent Gridiron game, *John Madden '92*.

As the game's been reprogrammed, tips that worked in the first game may not have the desired effect in the updated version. Strategy-wise, this one's still a minor headache.

In defence, it's always wise to try to rush the quarterback, as this gives you an opportunity to either sack the quarterback or tackle the running-back when in possession.

Minnesota has a potent offensive attack. Turnovers make the difference in close games.

The best set-up to use is the **nickel defence**, because this provides good linebacker coverage and reasonable zonal tackling, if needed.

Within the nickel defence, the best set-up is to read the play and use a **bump & run** (so, nickel, read, bump and run). To gain even more of an advantage, move your linebacker (No. 53) onto the second row of defence, forward, just in front of the line of scrummage (careful, don't go offside). Now rush the quarterback. This takes practice and skill, so persevere!

When tackling, try to dive ([A]), as this gives you more power to stop the guy carrying the ball. Some players still need more than a tackle, though. If they manage to gain a few yards and are close to a first-down, use the **goaline** set-up, the attack, centre play. This puts you in a good rush position to stop yardage being made.

When on offense, there are several things to remember. First, take note of what Madden has to say about the teams at the start of the game, ie Houston like to pass and use the **run & shoot** set up, Buffalo like to run with the ball (No. 34 is a demon running-back).

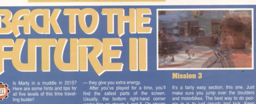
It's worth noting wide receivers can only take one tackle, while running-backs can crunch-tackle through several players.

When your quarterback is in possession, give him plenty of time to throw the ball. When receiving a catch, try to stand on your circle, motionless; this enables you to get the ball.

When converting a point after a touchdown, select middle power with no direction and this should go through — a little or a lot of power sends it veering left or right respectively.

CODES

D37LLW47	HOUSTON	v	SEATTLE
D4ZR6DNL	HOUSTON	v	BUFFALO
D5P3SJDX	HOUSTON	v	WASHINGTON
C931VDH4	WASHINGTON	v	MINNESOTA



Is Marty in a muddle in 2015? Here are some hints and tips for all five levels of this time travelling buster!

Mission 1

There are seven streets to zoom through before you get to the Town Hall. Collect the bonus objects that appear in the road — they give you extra energy.

After you've played for a time, you'll find the safest parts of the screen. Usually, the bottom right-hand corner works fine on streets 1 and 5. On streets 2, 4 and 6, stay in the bottom right-hand corner, as near to the pavement as possible. When Griff appears, either punch his lights out pretty sharpish or travel round him in circles, avoiding his beating!

Mission 2

Use the pause button here, but make a sketch of the layout etc first, as the figures disappear when the game's paused. Always remember, as soon as a door opens, someone walks through it. Think ahead, that's the key!

Mission 3

It's a fairly easy section, this one. Just make sure you jump over the boulders and motorbikes. The best way to do people in is to just crouch and kick. Keep walking and carry out this method of attack all through the level.

Mission 4

Start at the top left-hand corner and complete the sliding puzzle in rows. You now have all the organised bits on one side, which leaves space to rejiggle the other parts. Use the pause from time to time to work out what's going on. Remember, there's a time limit, so that pause button comes in very handy!

Mission 5

The same method as Level One. This time, ensure you pick up as many bonus items as possible as there are even more meanies to zap your energy.

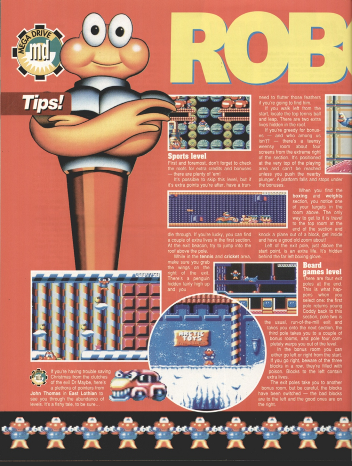
■ DOUBLE DRAGON (MS)
Tearing your hair out on the later levels of this coin-op conversion? Try jumping 30 times at the start of every level, and hey presto, you'll be slaughtering till the cows come home!

■ THE IMMORTAL (MD)
Here are codes to reach Levels Five, Six and Seven respectively. D4BFD41000EB0 (Shrinking Level) BCFEF51010A41 (Spider Level) 6B10F61010ACL (Norlac Level)

■ ARNOLD PALMER GOLF (MD)
I'd heard there was a secret tournament somewhere in this game and now I've found it! In the password box, enter 'f's across the top part and '9's across the bottom.

■ POWER STRIKE (MS)
On the title screen, push down, right, down, down, left, right, up, right and [1] twice. You get ten lives! Aren't I good to you?!

■ GHOULS AND GHOSTS (MD)
Need invincibility? Press the reset button four times, then when the title screen pops up, press [A]four times, up, down, left, right, hold [B] and press start.



Tips!

Sports level

First and foremost, don't forget to check the roofs for extra credits and bonuses — there are plenty of 'em!

It's possible to skip this level, but if it's extra points you're after, have a trundle through. If you're lucky, you can find a couple of extra lives in the first section. At the exit beacon, try to jump into the roof above the pole.

While in the **tennis** and **cricket** area, make sure you grab the wings on the right of the exit. There's a penguin hidden fairly high up and you need to flutter those feathers if you're going to find him.

If you walk left from the start, locate the top tennis ball and leap. There are two extra lives hidden in the roof.

If you're greedy for bonuses — and who among us isn't? — there's a teensy weensy room about four screens from the extreme right of the section. It's positioned at the very top of the playing area and can't be reached unless you push the nearby plunger. A platform falls and stops under the bonuses.

When you find the **boxing** and **weights** section, you notice one of your targets in the room above. The only way to get to it is travel to the top room at the end of the section and knock a plane out of a block, get inside and have a good old zoom about!

Left of the exit pole, just above the start point, is an extra life. It's hidden behind the far left boxing glove.

Board games level

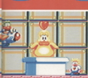
There are four exit poles at the end. This is what happens when you select one: the first pole returns young Coddy back to this section, pole two is the usual, run-of-the-mill exit and takes you onto the next section, the third pole takes you to a couple of bonus rooms, and pole four completely warps you out of the level.

In the bonus room you can either go left or right from the start. If you go right, beware of the three blocks in a row, they're filled with poison. Blocks to the left contain extra lives.

The exit poles take you to another bonus room, but be careful, the blocks have been switched — the bad blocks are to the left and the good ones are on the right.

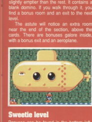
If you're having trouble saving Christmas from the clutches of the evil Dr Maybe, here's a plethora of pointers from **John Thomas** in **East Lothian** to see you through the abundance of levels. It's a fishy tale, to be sure...

OCOD



In the **dominoes** and **playing card** section, keep a look out for a cavern that's slightly emptier than the rest. It contains a blank domino. If you walk through it, you find a bonus room and an exit to the next level.

The astute will notice an extra room near the end of the section, above the cards. There are bonuses galore inside, with a bonus exit and an aeroplane.



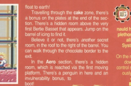
Sweetie level

Bonuses can be found in the bottom left-hand corner. Find two statues and leap on them for extra points. Stand on the statues until your bonus stops, then jump up and grab the brolly. Collect the pennies as you float to earth!

Travelling through the **cake** zone, there's a bonus on the plates at the end of the section. There's a hidden room above the very first Bertie Basset that appears. Jump on the barrel of icing to find it.

Believe it or not, there's *another* secret room, in the roof to the right of the barrel. You can walk through the chocolate border to the exit.

In the **Aero** section, there's a hidden room, which is reached via the first moving platform. There's a penguin in here and an invulnerability bonus, to boot!



Arts level

A fairly easy one, this, but if you want the bonuses scattered fairly high up, you need to negotiate the moving platforms.



In the **paint** section, there's a tunnel to the right of the exit, leading to another bonus room.

There's a hidden room to the right of the first moving platform and a bonus near the birdies. Take this, then continue through the right-hand part of the cavern into a tunnel full of bonuses and a secret room.

In the bonus room you're confronted with an exit pole. This isn't the real one and hitting it takes you back to the start of the section. The real pole is to the right, surrounded by bonus credits.



And that's your lot, *James Pond* fans, make of it what you will!



Grant Asher from Cumbernauld has sent in a plethora of tips for all you Master System owners.

■ **R-Type**
On the restart countdown, rotate the control stick continuously for up to 12 extra credits.

■ **Vigilante**
Press up and left and button 1 for a level select.

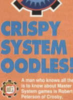
■ **Ghost House**
Keep jumping on the arrows that are fired at you and after a while you'll turn golden and become invincible for a short time.

■ **Golden Axe**
When you lose all your continues, you can get an extra one by pressing up and left and button 1.

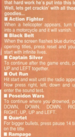
■ **Rastan**
Press reset and then buttons 1, 2 and the down and left button. The logo will turn blue to indicate that you have infinite continues.

■ **Tennis Ace**
Type in the password **NKOF VVLG LKGS FCKK** this takes you to the very last game.





A man who knows all there is to know about Master System games is Robert Peterson of Crosby, Liverpool. He's sent in oodles and oodles of tips. Our Rob deserves a £50 TIP VOUCHER methinks for all that hard work he's put into this lot! Well, lets get crackin' with all those goodies...



■ **Action Fighter**
When a helicopter appears, turn back into a motorcycle and it will vanish.

■ **Black Belt**
When the screen flashes blue during the opening titles, press reset and you will start with infinite lives.

■ **Captain Silver**
To continue after the game ends, press UP and LEFT together.

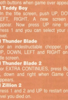
■ **Out Run**
Hit start and wait until the radio appears. Now press right, left, down and up to enter the sound test.

■ **Poseidon Wars**
To continue where you drowned, press DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, RIGHT, RIGHT, UP, UP and LEFT.

■ **Quartet**
For bigger bullets, press pause 14 times on the title

■ **Rampage**
To start off where you died, hold down both buttons when game over appears.

■ **Teddy Boy**
On the title screen, push UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT. A new screen will appear. Now press UP nine times. Press 1 and you can select your start level.

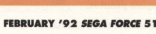


■ **Thunder Blade**
For an indestructable chopper, press UP, DOWN, LEFT and RIGHT on the title screen.

■ **Thunder Blade 2**
For EXTRA CONTINUES, press Button 2, down and right when Game Over appears.

■ **Zillion 2**
Press 1 and 2 and UP to restart on the level you died on.





■ **STRIDER (MD)** Press the joypad down, then press [A], [C], [B], [C], [A], while the master is in fits of hysterics, and you get all your energy replenished each time you die!

■ **COLUMNS (GG)** When in Flash mode, select height 9. Choose your level of difficulty and start the game. This may sound strange, but now end the game! When the Flash Demo breaks the Flash Back, you get to see different endings, depending on which difficulty level you chose!

■ **MICKEY MOUSE, CASTLE OF ILLUSION (MD)** On the title screen, hold down [A], [B], [C] and press START. Mickey now turns into a wee ghostie and can travel through walls, enemies etc etc.

■ **ALEX KIDD IN MIRACLE WORLD (MS)** As soon as the Game Over message appears, hold the controller in the up position and press [2] eight times. Now you can continue where your last game ended. 400 coins are needed to execute this one so you'll need some spare pennies.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG



Paul Mellerick's been trying to beat this one for ages (instead of doing any real work —Big Ed) — get Sonic through the Green Hill Zone, levels 1 or 2, in less than 29 seconds for a 50,000-point bonus. It can be done, but don't hang around or else you're dead meat. The biggest obstacles are the rocks — get the bounces paced just right and they don't hold you up.

And another cheat from yours truley. When the title screen appears, press up, [C], down, [C], left, [C], right, [C]. Press START and hold down [A]. If your score line is a series of letters and figures, the trick's worked. Press [B] to get into the programmers' debugging mode. Now you can create your own Sonic hell. [A] changes Sonic into another sprite (keeping pressing to cycle through), [C] places the sprite.

MICKEY MOUSE, CASTLE OF ILLUSION

On level four, collect the dancing 'A' from the coffee cup screen, exit, and climb the ladder to the left. Keep going until you reach a room that contains a button, a barrel and two insects.

Throw the barrel and button at the insects. You can then use the barrel to climb up the ladder to the right. Kill the insect you find on the next screen and pass another jigging 'A'. You should find a drop in the floor nearby. Mickey can fit through this.

Jump up and press [2] twice. The floor opens and Mickey falls into a secret room with treasure chests inside. There's a coin and an extra life to collect.

DECAPATTACK

This ghoulish arcade-adventure was well-received last month and here, for all you ardent Decappers, is what you need to know for its completion thanks to Paul Mellerick and Paul Reed from Leicester. As you know, when you reach the third stage of every level you need to find a special item in order to finish the stage — here's how to find them, stage by stage.

Level 1-3
Fall down immediately from the platform you are on, walk right, see the statue, smash it, collect the item.

Level 2-3
With this level you need to follow the landscape first, fall down, then go up, then down again. Walk as far left as you can and jump up to the platform above you and smash the statue.

Level 3-3
Jump up onto the clouds and keep going right when you will see two columns of arrows, jump down between them to land on the rocks on top of the water. Walk right along the top of the water, and fall into it, walk (sorry, swim) back until you see you statue and smash it.

Level 4-3
Travel through the first bit of water and along to the next one, go left then down the hole, left over the lava pit to the statue.

Level 5-3
Go right over the first two lava pits to the third one and destroy the statue.

Level 6-3
The secret item is hidden in the statue, which is situated above the molten lava and under the ice, in the middle of the stage.

Level 7-3
The item is in the water protected by the fish-like creatures.

End-of-Level bosses

Each boss, has a weakness, but you need to know where, well now you do.

Level 1
When he makes his run towards you run to the right of the screen when he turns around, come behind him and fire away. This should finish him off.

Level 2
This massive frog looks very intimidating but don't be put off. Wait in

TACK

the middle of the screen and when it jumps for you, position yourself just in front then fire away. Don't forget that the mini-frogs it fires can be destroyed as well.

Level 3
When he appears use your jump higher & move faster spell, and jump up to attack his head, this will take some time and you may need to use the spell again. His firepower is very easy to dodge and should not be too much of a problem.

Level 4
Use your further reach and greater strength spell and jump around after the monster until he is dead.

Level 5
This Mole is very tough, but not impossible. You must only hit him a couple of times when he appears out of the ground, and then dodge the stones that he throws. Repeat this and he will die (eventually)

Level 6
The King Kong lookalike is extremely easy, just fire away at him when his arms are up you can inflict damage on him.

Level 7
Mr Max D. Cap is, as you'd expect, very tough — you will need a couple of hearts to kill him and finish the game. Fire at his head and use your greater strength spell to kill Max and receive your special reward.

■ STORMLORD (MD)
Get five extra lives! Pause the game, then press [A] four times, [C] twice, [B] three times, [C] once and then [A]. Bingo! You're only allowed up to nine lives. For extra time pause the game again and press [B] once, [A] three times, [C] once, up three times and [A] three times.

■ PACMANIA (MS)
To find the hidden level on Tecmagik's spiffing little game, just munch all those dots, but DON'T eat the power pills. When a mystery icon appears screen-centre, munch it and you go to the bonus level. If the ghosts gobble you up on this level you won't return to the start of it, so make sure you amass loadsa points.

■ TOEJAM AND EARL (MD)
Our team at Sega Towers played this game to death and accidentally came across a secret level. Go to the third level and find a pair of wings. Don't use them yet. Jump into space and land on Level Two. Jump off again and land on Level One. Then do the same and you find yourself on the secret level. There are loadsa presents dotted around to tickle your tastebuds.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

If *Impossible Mission* is proving to be a mission impossible, those kind folk at US GOLD have sent in a plethora of tips to help you out.

● Your exploration of the tunnels and chambers that comprise Elvin's underground stronghold is mapped on this panel. Try to work from left to right across the complex, remembering where Elvin's control room entrance is and where the two Code Rooms are located.

● You will usually have to get past a robot to search an item of furniture. You can somersault over a robot by pressing Fire 1, but practice your timing!

● Use the lifts to move between platforms. When you are standing on a lift press UP/DOWN on the joypad to move. Remember, when you are planning how to search a room, also think about how you will get out!

● To search a piece of furniture, stand in front of it and press UP on the joypad. The word SEARCHING appears with a red bar underneath. This shows the time it will take to search. If you are being attacked by a robot, you can come back later to resume your search of furniture.

● SNOOZE ICON - With this icon you can use a COMPUTER TERMINAL (In all rooms) to DISABLE ROBOTS - This will temporarily stop all robots, enabling you to quickly search more difficult furniture items. Don't waste this icon on searching just one item, but wait until there are several close by that you can search quicky.

● LIFT RESET ICON - With this icon you can use a COMPUTER TERMINAL to reset all the lifts in a room to their original position. This can be useful if you have fallen to a lower platform or to escape from a chamber.

● If you have a SNOOZE icon, you can disable robots. If you have LIFT RESET, you can select RESET LIFTS. Without the icons, you will be told PASSWORD REQUIRED. Select LOG OFF and find an icon!

● Amongst all the chambers are 2 CODE ROOMS, where you can earn some extra SNOOZES and LIFT RESETS. Walk up to the console and press UP. A sequence of squares will flash accompanied by a musical note. Use the glove which will appear to touch each square in ascending musical order ie. from low to high notes. When successful the board will flash and award you a SNOOZE or LIFT RESET.

You can use the Code Rooms as often as you like, but each time the sequence will get longer. You can quit at any time by touching the orange bar at the bottom of the checkerboard.

Remember where the Code Rooms are in case you really need a SNOOZE or LIFT RESET, but don't spend too much time on them if you don't need to.

● To solve the puzzle pieces and discover the letters of the secret password, press Fire 2 to access your Pocket Computer. All of the puzzle pieces you have collected are stored on the pocket computer. Use these arrows to look through all of the pieces.

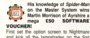
● You can also access the main computer via your pocket computer, by telephone. Highlight the telephone icon and press Fire 1. Each time you call the main computer it will cost you 2 minutes, but it's worth it!

● The puzzle pieces as you collect them may be back to front, upside down etc. If you select this option the main computer will correctly orientate the puzzle pieces.

● You can also check with the main computer whether you have enough puzzle pieces to solve a puzzle and find a letter from the secret password. A completed puzzle looks like a computer punch card. Each one is made up of 4 puzzle pieces and reveals one letter from the secret password. There are 9 letters in the password. And in the words of good ol' Brucie "That's all there is to it!"

SPIDER-MAN

VOUCHER WINNER! £50



His knowledge of *Spider-Man* on the Master System wins Martin Morrison of Ayrshire a mega £50 SOFTWARE VOUCHER!

First set the option screen to Nightmare and kick all the lampshades on the first stage. The bulbs will smash and the screen will go dark. You'll still be able to see where you're going, but the baddies won't see you.

On the second stage, when you fall down the pit to get a key, Venom might appear rather than the bats. Venom is easy to kill, take a picture of him.

On the third stage, go to the near end of the screen and you will see two blue boxes. Kick the top one and everything will go dark. When you kill Electro, you will go to the stage where you got the key. Don't travel up the middle, go to the very left-hand side of the screen. Go right to the top, kick the blue box. Do this on the right-hand side too. All the electricity will go off and you can get a key. Now position yourself so you drop to the left-hand side of the screen. You will see a Game Gear flashing. Collect it and when you get the chance to rest or continue, the message "Button 1: Continue or Button 2: Game Gear" will appear. Press Button 2 and you will go to a *Pac-Man* type stage. Collect all the keys, but watch the two Venom's that chase you. If they get close, press Button 1 and you can web them for a few seconds.

On the fourth stage, kick all the street lights. Don't try to fight Sandman or web him, because nothing happens. Get him near a fire hydrant and kick it. Don't forget to take a picture of him.

On stage five, kick all the lamps. If you're short of life, punch the US mail boxes and you'll get extra energy. When you come face to face with Hobgoblin, fly-kick him, but take a picture first!

MEGA DRIVE RIGGING!

Tipsmaster extraordinaire, Paul Rigby has been busy cheating on his Mega Drive. Cast your peepers on what he has to offer!

Alien Storm
To stay alive after you die, you must have enough energy to do your extra move and you must be the robot, Scooter. If you die while using Scooter, use his special attack and you won't die. You will have to build your lives back up, but it does avoid losing one life.

Arcus Odyssey
Enter the second room in Act 3 bonus chests. In Act 4, watch for the shadows on the floor. There's a pack of dragon's waiting to attack.

Burning Force
To get 10 lives per continue, press Start on the title screen so that START/OPTION appears. Press B, A, B, A, A, C, A, A and Start.

Hard Drivin'
If you can't beat the Phantom on the stunt track, then try the speed track. In the championship lap, turn right instead of going straight ahead. You'll pass over the turn signs and find yourself battling the Phantom on the speed track.

To get traffic on the Practice Track, play a regular game then when you finish and return to the title screen, press C to enter the Options screen. Set the game to Practice. Hit B and C, the press Start to exit the menu.

King's Bounty
Use this code to see the end screen: XYZ-YZ-VZC JAH-DO-MBP YRO-PB-6HW 276-3W-PNT 3YW-X7-5QG VVR-TQ-PON DA9-64-8RC

Now type in these coordinates on the continentia: X=21, Y=38. Fly to these coordinates, since your entire is composed of flying creatures. Choose the **Search The Area** option and prepare for the ending.

Midnight Resistance
To select a stage, when the title screen appears, hold down C and press Start. When you begin the game, press Start to pause and then hit **A** to advance one level. You can repeat this trick endlessly to skip any level.

Might and Magic
Free Food- In your list of commands, select Share and then Food. Do this several times and your entire party}s food supply will increase. You can go beyond the limits of 40 units with this cheat.

Secret Treasure-Place two hirelings in your party and go out to get attacked by the enemy. After beating the enemy, dismiss one of the hirelings and search for the treasure chest.

Slaughter Sport
To select a character other than Rex, using the following sequence on the title screen:

Bonapart	Up, A, C
Edwina	Left, B & C, C
RobochiC	Right, Up, Down
Stump	A & C, Right, C
Ramses	Right, Left, A
Webra	A & C, Up, Right
Guano	Up, Right, A & B
McFire	Down, C, Right
Skinny	Right, Down, Right
Sheba	B & C, B, B
Brainiac	Right, Right, C
Buff	Left, C, B
El Toro	B & C, A, Up
Spidra	A, Down, B

Phelios
To gain extra continues, during the Chapter 1 introduction screen, press C, A, B, A, C, A, B, A. This brings the total number of continues up to 9.

Expert Mode- After you finish the game in Advanced Mode, return to the options screen. There should be an Expert Mode added to the list.

Populous
Stage Select- To select stages without a password, first choose "New Game" and wait for the password prompt. Now hold down **B** and press Up and Down on the control pad. You should see numbers appearing instead of letters. It will take some experimenting, but by entering these numbers you'll begin selecting new levels. Try multiplying the number of the level you want to reach by 5.

Saint Sword
Level select passwords:
Level 3-1: IQW1EL
Level 4-2: KWWKQQ
Level 6-1: S2YY2Y
Level 6-2: S0GZAL
Level 4-1, Second Quest: K2J0CK
Level 5-2, Second Quest: QW10C2
Level 7-2, Second quest: XXK-SIS

Altered Beast
CONTINUES: When you die, hold down the **A** button and press Start repeatedly until you appear on the screen on which you died.

OPTIONS: Hold down **B** and press Start during the title screen for a set of options.

SELECT THE BEAST: Change into the beast you want on each stage by pressing DOWN and LEFT while holding all three buttons during the title screen.

ROUND SELECT: Choose your round on the option screen and then hold down **A** and Start on the title screen.

SOUND TEST: To hear all the sounds and music in the game, press UP and RIGHT while holding down **A** and **C**

ATTACK THE CREDIT SCREEN: When you rescue Athena and the credits appear, kick or punch them to scroll them downwards.

Forgotten Worlds
Unlimited Continues: When playing the two-player game, you can always continue as long as one person is still alive. By pressing Start on the second controller before the game ends, a single player can keep a game going for as long as is needed.

Last Battle
After a game has ended, press and hold A, B and C and then Start when the screen reads "Legend of the Final Hero", you'll be able to continue. This only works for Level 2 and above.

Twin Cobra
For the end sequence, press Start to reach the green title screen and press Up, Down, Right, Left, A, B, C and Start.

■ ROAD RASH (MD)
More codes, the first two allow you to start the game on Level Four, the other two, Level Five.
00000 01DU0
000M9 2ICVJ
00000 05BJ1
0059U 574C8

■ LAKERS VS CELTICS (MD)
Type in 3L2 GJS and the LA Lakers play against Philadelphia. Only one game is needed to win the final.

■ SHINOBI (GG)
When the gigantic robot first appears, stand as far to the left as possible and jump over his shots. When he comes in to land, thwack him quickly and get out of his way! When his second form pops up, leap over the purple flames and hit him as you dodge the boomerangs. Use the sword, as this works wonders. You need to hit him at least ten times on both occasions before he dies

■ FANTASIA (MD)
In World 1-2, leap up to a platform near the start of the level and grab a musical note to get an extra life. Go right till you see a treasure chest. Jump inside and you warp back to the start of Level 1-2. Grab the note again and jump into the chest. Keep doing this and you can collect nine extra men, er, mice.

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Advance Play!

LASE POWE

Just released in Japan, the Mega-CD is the hottest black box to come out of the East since the Mega Drive itself. SEGA FORCE was the first mag to get one in the office the second it arrived in Britain. Here's, our exclusive hands-on report!

Amazing! Brilliant! Confounding! It arrived. It got mated to its Mega Drive — it wouldn't switch on! But more of that later! Once you strip away the polystyrene and polythene, the Mega-CD turns out to be a surprisingly light, rather squat black box which forms an attractive plinth to rest your beloved Mega Drive on top of.

The Mega-CD is turned on when you switch on the MD (or it should — see Power On panel). Presumably to save costs the M-CD has no switches, just a couple of LEDS to show what's happening. Even if you only want to play a music CD, you need to use onscreen menus — which is irritating.

The joypad lets you move a cursor around and choose between the various functions, the most important of which is OPEN — otherwise you can't

ABOVE
Four oblong holes accept offset flanges from a metal plate supplied with M-CD, which screws onto Mega Drive base, making for a more secure fit. It's important to note that the M-CD is sold separately from the Mega Drive.

LEFT SIDE
Looks important. Isn't. There's a small slot in a sliding block through which the lead from stereo headphones plugged into the MD can be fed, tidying things up and stopping the plug being wrenched out when you accidentally pull on the line.

CD DRAWER can only be opened and closed by onscreen menus. According to instructions accepts both 12cm 'albums' and 8cm 'singles' CDS.

READY glows green when the M-CD is powered up via the MD's power switch.

INDICATORS Not LEDS, but diagrams showing what's happening, ie when there's some CD ACCESSING both READY and ACCESS are solidly illuminated, neither blinking.

PHONO SOCKETS standard hi-fi sockets for left and right stereo sound output connect to your hi-fi.

MIXING supports the growing craze for Karaoke, so you can bop as you bash



Mega-CD

TEC SPEC: CD-ROM is, essentially, a disk drive like you might get for a computer. Information is stored not on instant-access chips, as on a cart, but on a Compact Disc. This means slight pauses while new data gets pulled off the disk — *Heavy Nova* frequently walks a squat robot across the screen to 'entertain' you for the five seconds or so it can take to load in a wodge of new code.

However Sega have built-in a six megabit buffer to minimise delays. Six megabits is the size of some complete games! Compact Discs, though, can store a whopping 676,000Kbyte of data. Every MS and MD game yet written could be stored on a single CD! What's more CDS are relatively cheap to produce, unlike carts, so we can look forward to the games becoming cheaper.

Mega-CD offers more than rapid access to loadsa code, though. Sampled effects and music can be played off the CD and mixed with the MD's own sound effects. The sonic possibilities are obviously immense, though judging by early releases, it's going to take programmers a while to suss them all out.

And graphics? All that memory space means the sky's the limit for some stunning static pictures, but the clever bit is in yet another new chip — an extra central processor unit running faster than the MD's should turbocharge game speed. Graphics can be scaled and rotated at stunning pace, and rumours suggest genuinely arcade-perfect conversions of games such as *Rad Racer*.

Combining enhanced graphics and sound with massive memory storage makes for the ultimate home entertainment system.

POWERPLAY: A Motorola MC 68000 CPU running at 12.5Mhz, plus 6 Megabits memory buffer, 512K 8-channel PCM sound chip, 128Kbit CD-ROM and 64Kbit miscellaneous. The operating system is on a 1 Megabit ROM chip.

Power on — or not!

We said grey import Mega-CDs could be a nightmare last ish, and we were right! First things first. So far the Mega-CD only works with Japanese NTSC Mega Drives, those with the magenta trim and 16-bit in large type above the power on/off light. A mysterious signal from these machines turns the Mega-CD on, otherwise the thing just sits there, completely inert and useless.

However not even all magenta Mega Drives will work. A lot of importers get their MDs from Hong Kong and these are specially modified to work with PAL — the circuit boards are printed with the words PAL and it also features on the small label on the underside of the MD. So check which type of the MD you've got very carefully before buying.

Another problem is that although some MDs come with easily removable plastic sleeves on the edge connectors, a lot also have a non-conductive black coating which must be taken off (see picture) — very carefully. Thinners might be used, but one slip and you've melted a chip. Alternatively you could use a sharp knife to painstakingly scratch through the film. Fortunately, only one side needs cleaning, so you don't have to take the Mega Drive completely apart to get at the top side.

Do all this and everything should work swimmingly well. However if PAL and NTSC machines are so different you might end up only being able to play Japanese CD games — missing out on the text-heavy games such as RPGS, which could be one of the most exciting element of the Mega-CD.

It's a confusing old world, isn't it?

Female edge connector, which accepts the MD's male connector. sits inside protective covering

ACCESS

CD IN

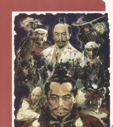
CD OUT

STAND-BY MODE

ACCESS glows red when the disk is being ACCESSed. CD-ROM is certainly fast, but finding and reading code still takes longer than the instant access of carts.

AC ADAPTOR SOCKET plug in a standard Sega powerpack. Unusable Japanese power supply is unsurprisingly supplied with the Japanese unit, but many grey-importers throw in a UK power supply free of charge.





Four eagerly awaited games in Japan: Tenkafubu, above; Lunar the Silver Star, below; Earnest Evans, above right (and the boyfriend of El Viento); and Nostalgia 1907



Menus

Pressing START on the joypad takes you from the demo to this options screen. You have to open the disk drawer first, of course, then once your CD's in you can simply press play to get music. On *Sol Feace* this gives you silence for a while — presumably game code — then brings up the long Japanese spoken intro plus music.

It's more useful, of course, for standard audio CDs and below it are comprehensive programming options to select the order in which you hear the CD's tracks, repeat your selection, reset and even two random play options.

While it's playing you can admire the left/right signals as they're shown on the horizontal strip in typical hi-fi fashion. More interestingly there's an OPTION option which takes you to mucho Japanese squiggles; press a button again to get onto a set of options. The thrust seems to be save/loading data to memory store cartridges.



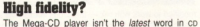
put anything in the flipping machine!

But if you don't put anything in the M-CD you get a simple, but stunning demo.

To the accompaniment of some very sharply defined — but still typically dull — Japanese coin-op music, the M-CD logo gets thrown all over the place to demonstrate the machine's custom chips. It spins! It rotates! It stretches! It bounces from corner to corner! It zooms from pinpoint to screen-filling, somewhat blocky billboard! It goes all late '60s, leaving a psychedelic trail behind itself.

It's a shame the background's static, and the music bland, but the twisting movement of this logo is amazingly smooth and slick. Quite what games programmers will be able to do with it boggles the mind, some effing great big mega-monsters should be possible for sure!

And if that gets you drooling, just think about the massive memory!



High fidelity?

The Mega-CD player isn't the *latest* word in CD audio, but it is damn good — and you can listen to it without an amplifier by using the MD's headphone socket. In fact the instructions claim speakers can be plugged into this socket as well, presumably the active speakers designed for Walkmen. But if you do have an amp, there's standard left/right phono output.

One nifty special feature is the Mega-CD's capability to show CD+G (Compact Disc Graphics), which is available on a rare bunch of audio CDs. Occasionally record companies include a CD's lyrics and occasionally a visual on the CD, which can be displayed on a TV or monitor as the music's played. It's not very dramatic, though, and few companies bother because few people have the means to read them.

SEGA FORCE rating

There's fantastic potential in this black box. It substantially upgrades the Mega Drive graphically, sonically and, most importantly of all; massively increases its memory. However, early releases have yet to properly exploit the technology, and compatibility problems mean a wait-and-see attitude is best for most Sega fans.

Also grey importers are currently charging around £330 for the unit (without games) although it only costs around half that in Japan. When Sega release it here — hopefully in the middle of the year — a price tag of £200 is likely. In the meantime check out our two in-depth Advance Plays of the first two Mega-CD releases on pages 60 to 64, and the jamboree of upcoming ceedeefulness on these pages



SILVERY S

Sega's consistent software support for its hardware means that unlike some other manufacturers we could name, its CD-ROM drive is unlikely to be short of software companies falling over themselves to develop games for it.

An instantaneous sell-out of the first Mega-CD batch in Japan indicates yet another goldmine for software houses, and Japanese mags are already full of ads bearing the Mega-CD logo, pushing games exclusively for the Mega-CD.

Unsurprisingly there's plenty of RPGS using the massive storage capacity to hold tons of screens and text. No doubt these games should be fantastic but non-Japanese speakers beware!









With its extra memory reserves, the Mega-CD will attract many RPGS — a problem for grey import players! Typical of the first of these graphic adventures is Tenkafubu and, below left, the sepia tones of Nostalgia 1907.



OFTWARE



Above and left: three screen shots from Tenkafubu, which promises to keep RPGERS in action for many hours.

diers for aeons. *Lunar: The Silver Star* more ambitiously mixes cutesy graphics with RPG complexity. There's a choice of characters to control and over 30 interactive peeps to meet, fight and trade with.

But what should be the real show-stopper of the earlyish releases is Mindscape's *Wing Commander*. This PC game came on stacks of disks, required a hard disk to be playable and boasted some of the most impressive static graphics seen, a great plot and highly impressive 3-D first-person perspective space combat. A mix of RPG depth and classic arcade action makes this one to look out for.

Another PC game up for conversion is Ocean's *Sim Earth*, which is indeed a simulation of the Earth, well, it's ecology 'n' stuff. Intelligent dinosaurs, giant ants — it's all in your hands, and if the Earth isn't enough how about other planets in the solar system with Venus being particularly tough to evolve life on!

Earnest Evans is another one from the Wolf Team (*Sol Feace, El Viento*) and by contrast seems a fairly conventional run, jump and blast everything arcade game.

The Japanese release schedule promises around three games per month. By far the biggest category of games will be RPGS — up to 40% of the initial releases, plus another 14% for adventures and 10% for strategy. Surprisingly shoot-'em-ups will be restricted to around 10%, as will sport, racing and puzzle games, leaving a final 10% for miscellaneous releases. But whatever the game SEGA FORCE will be bringing you the full, in-depth Advance Play run down as soon as they appear!

Nostalgia 1907 looks intriguing. It certainly doesn't attempt to stretch the MD's palette with its sepia-tinted pics, but they're very atmospheric and there's loads of 'em! The game's set aboard an elegant transatlantic cruise liner packed with mysterious characters.

Tenkafubu's graphics are even more limited than *Nostalgia*'s, although there are some very nice intro screens. It's essentially a strategy game with which the Mega-CD's memory could keep you shuffling sol-





Lunar (The Silver Star), right and below, boasts loads of attractive animation screens as well as detailed overhead views, but it's Earnest Evans, left, that's the most wanted Mega-CD game in Japan, they can't wait!









MEGA CD

Advance Play!



No, this game hasn't got a chunk of lime stuck in the top, but are the MEGA CD games just a novelty? CLAIRE MORLEY turns Japanese...

The game comes on a CD (what else?) printed with a full colour pic and is packaged just like your standard audio CD. The 18-page manual's exceptionally well written, witty, entertaining, amusing — as Japanese hieroglyphics go, it's top notch!

Ahem, passing swiftly onwards we can admire a fair few colour illustrations and screenshots. The latter include six end-level creatures, suggesting to my razor-sharp mind six levels. Not that many, but steady on let's have a look at the game first...

Cor! As game intros go *Sol Feace* boasts one of the best ever. It starts off with more of those Japanese squiggles (two-minutes worth), but wait while they scroll by and suddenly you're in a full-blown cartoon movie. A series of fast-cuts flash scene after scene by, the three characters strap themselves into their ship, throttles are pushed forward.

There's a pause to show the title screen, again, then we're into a full-blown battle. It's tremendous; big full-colour graphics, well-animated and accompanied by some great, crystal clear music. A five-and-a-half minute demo isn't bad!

Transformer power

Pressing Start aborts the George Lucas spectacular and gives you some conventional options. You can either go into the game direct, or change the difficulty level from flippin' impossible to absolutely kiddin' level. You can also vary speed between high, middle and low, plus alter the music and sound effects options. If you die you get a third option — continues, which appears to be infinite. It returns you to the start of the level you're on which, since it's so tough, hardly ruins the game but does indicate a failure to produce a more sensible game difficulty.

it's great; big full-colour graphics, superbly animated

Enter the game and you're greeted by a rather bland space backdrop, a dull spaceship and a horde of attacking aliens. Blast them to pieces and you might get to collect some of the power-ups, concealed in canisters which can be blown apart with a swift burst of laser fire. There are four powerful upgrades, transforming your ship's firepower and shape (see box).

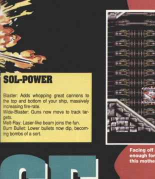
Flicker free?

So far, so conventional and the graphics aren't going to knock you out of your seat. Backdrops on levels two and three are stunningly bland while enemy ships aren't awesome. However some of the villains are pretty big, massive arms swing about (but only the claws kill!), huge chunks of space debris hurtle past. The programmers could be using the Mega-CD, albeit in a rather limited fashion, to decrease flicker on extremely intensive graphic movement.

To begin with the game seems impossible, but a little practice soon sees you through level one. It's fun, in a limited sort of way, but there's none of the imagination of *Gynoug*.

Later levels look a bit more promising, but basically it's like every other shoot-'em-up you've played, faster and slicker than many and certainly good fun, but lacking originality — and the levels aren't massive either. At £36 it's reasonable fun, polished up with a great demo, but it's not the game to persuade you to get a Mega-CD NOW! What's to come will no doubt be awesome and that intro certainly hints at the potential!

CLAIRE



SOL-POWER

Blaster: Adds whopping great cannons to the top and bottom of your ship, massively increasing fire-rate.
Wide-Blaster: Guns now move to track targets.
Melt-Ray: Laser-like beam joins the fun.
Burn Bullet: Lower bullets now dip, becoming bombs of a sort.



Facing off against level two's massively well-armed walker which is tough enough for any end-level confrontation — there couldn't be any more after this mother, could there?





A fiery background shimmers beautifully behind yet another mega-blasting xeno confrontation. Below yet another super-baddie launches a hail of explosive bullets and homing missiles.



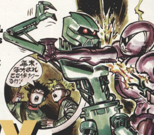
Dancing in the jaws of death is the only way to defeat this loathesome robotic arachnid.





Advance Play!

Mega-CD's here and PAUL MELLERICK's in Heavy Bossa Nova rhythms, but does this first CD-ROM do the world'sbest games machine justice?



HEAVY NOVA

Japan's Micronet committed to Mega-CD over a year ago, determined to be one of the first companies to release games for the stunning new hardware. However at that time the Mega-CD was not much more than vapourware, a collection of exciting specifications subject to change.

To get a game out at the same time as the Mega-CD perversely meant ignoring most of the special features which distinguish it. The promised rotation and scaling features allowed some super-smooth animation, so an ambitious beat-'em-up with massive sprites was begun.

Yet in the end it seems only the standard Mega Drive chips are exploited here, supported by 15 superlative soundtracks and lots of memory storage. (In fact Micronet are talking about doing a standard 8 Megabit cart, lacking only the music.)

NOVA SLAUGHTER

An amount of disk space is burned up in a slick intro, which impressively sets the scene for the action to follow. The game's actually similar to *Slaughter Sport*, a scrolling one- or two-player beat-'em-up with a good selection of big combat sprites.

The two-player option *really* define the similarity between this and *Slaughter Sport*, as this is a one-on-one battle, and you can choose the character you want. The screen shows the robot and details the moves you can make; note that the robot with the most moves is not necessarily easiest to operate! But at least it gives it some more depth than the Razorsoft game.

In the one-player game you control your Heavy Doll ('doll' is Japanese for 'robot') along a scrolling section avoiding all sorts of robots and traps to reach the end-of- level boss. These sections are very short early on but gradually become more complicated, with several platforms to search for the exit. The idea of these sections is to power up your robot by finding 'Level Up' boxes, which add extra robot moves, making it a better fighter — a novel addition to the game that provides you with a sense of progression the more powerful you become.

Expecting instant CD classics is a bit much

The number of moves available are huge. There are various types of throws, punch kick, jumps and combinations, and each is very well animated (watch out for your flying twisting kick flooring your opponent).

DISCO DOLL

All in all there are eight stages, split into three for the first round and five for the next, but there are three continues to help you out. There is more than likely some very corny, futuristic scenario in which Heavy Doll is some saviour of the world, but as all the text is Japanese, and as I don't speak Japanese, your guess is as good as mine.

The sound of course blows away the opposition in regards to cartridges, but you know that. You are provided with a soundtrack throughout the game and SFX abound. The game's graphics are very well drawn, animated and coloured but it could have been tweaked to make the robot faster to move. The opposition get gradually tougher and provide some incentive to get to a further stage than before. But with only eight levels, the challenge obviously isn't taking up masses of space on the wondrous silver disk.

Heavy Nova's one of the first CD games and expecting instant classics is a bit much, especially as this makes such limited use of the hardware.

The soundtrack's great, the intro's smart... gameplay ain't bad. The main sprites are packed with detail, boast loads of moves and are slickly animated — but aren't fast enough and the colour scheme is a little off, while backdrops are dull. Still, at around £36 this isn't a bad appetiser for what's to come! ***PAUL***

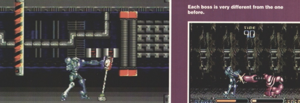
After comleting Mission 1, you recieve instructions for your next and final mission. Go to it.

You can fly with the aid of a backpack over your opponent and he can do the same to you.

To reach each end of level boss you must negociate you way through a platform type section. Here you must avoid the falling objects and find the special levers to open the door to the boss.

After each successful bout, you score depending on each move executed.

Punching the ball, gives you full energy. Go to it Bruno.



When trying to find the boss, mettalic objects walk along the floor, you can kill these by kicking them.

Each boss is very different from the one before.

On a dark and dirty night down in the gutters of game-freak alley, the colour of your trendy underpants nor the dexterity of your favourite hand movements don't count for twaddle. But the strength and manoeuvrability of your peripherals could be the difference between life and death. ADRIAN PITT wiggles wagglers and pokes pressables — all the latest gizmos for your Sega.

It's a jungle out there, to be sure! Game-freak alley's positively awash with posey Sega peripherals and attractive add-ons, but which joystick is worth jigging? Will the Light Phaser leave you in the dark? And what exactly is a Zoomer?

It's Sod's Law that you waltz into your local computer store, grab a joystick, part with precious pennies that've taken a year and a day to save, get it home and find it's a load of old doggy poo!

Fret not! SEGA FORCE intends doing away with the nightmare of purchasing those swanky peripherals. Not all are available yet mind, so if you want to double check before racing off down town, give the suppliers a ring, I've included their phone numbers, cos that's the kinda guy I am!

GAME GEAR BITS

Master System Adaptor



£34.99 Tired of waiting for *Sonic the Hedgehog* to appear on the small screen? With this nifty widget you can play any Master System cart on your Game Gear.

It slots neatly onto the back of the GG and a nice blue screw thingy keeps it in place! Pop in any Master System cart and away you go! They're excellent and few MS games suffer the miniaturisation. It's not been out that long and they're selling like hot toddies, so you might have quite a wait before you get hold of one.

Game Gear Magnifier

To be released Tired of screwing up the old peepers to see those incy wincy Game Gear sprites? Make way for this ingenious magnifying glass that attaches onto the back of the GG and rests neatly above the screen. They *do* improve game accuracy a touch.

TV Tuner

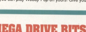
Sega, £74.99 Watch Challenge Anneka on your Game Gear! Yes, a boat-load of TV Tuners has arrived from Japan, and Sega estimate that well over 20,000 will have been gobbled up by telly addict Game Gear owners by now. It simply plugs into the back of the GG, easy eh? Now when your mates brag about their super cool mini-TVs, tell 'em you can play *Woody Pop* on yours! Give your local Sega dealer a ring to check on availability. Great value for money.

Car Adaptor

Sega, £17.99 A godsend for cool dudes trapped in a holiday car and trendy commuters stuck in traffic jams alike, this little lead plugs into your GG at one end and into a car lighter socket at the other. Makes GG batteries a thing of the past! But be wary of playing for too long if parked atop Ben Nevis — home's a long walk away!

Gear-to-Gear Cable

Sega, £4.99 A cheap and cheerful way of spending the night with a friend! No more lonesome Geegeeing. This handy lead lets you connect two machines to play those games which offer a simultaneous two-player facility. Worth buying, if you've got a friend that is!



MEGA DRIVE BITS

Powerbase Converter

Sega, £29.99 This gizmo sits smartly on top of your Mega Drive and turns it into a Master System. Do you want to do that? You might if you've recently upgraded and don't know what to do with those old MS carts! Double the amount of games and for only thirty sovs!

The Powercade

Active Consoles, £299.99 The ultimate gutter-cred accessory for 1992 that only true connoisseurs of fashion will appreciate. Wrap a Mega Drive in this super cabinet, complete with matching buttons and sticks, and don't forget to add a monitor to give that true feel of life in the arcades.



well 'ard

Extremely smart and only for dudes with wadsa money.

Action Replay Cart

Datel Electronics, £49.99 Get away with murder on most of your favourite MD games! Plug the Action Replay into your Mega Drive, and an MD cart on top of it. Switch on for a password screen, enter a code for the game you're playing and get infinite lives, oodles of energy et al (who's Al? — Ed). Comes complete with 20 passwords and with more to come in the Datel's *Gamebuster* newsletter.

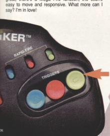
MEGA DRIVE JOYSTICKS AND JOYPADS

Control Pad

Sega, £14.99 It's a tough and sturdy critter, that works well, responsively. Any hassles with this and my name's Penelope Keith! Well worth splashing out on.

Arcade Power Stick

Sega, £34.99 I liked this one, the buttons are great, there's a Mega Fire function, the stick's easy to move and responsive. What more can I say? I'm in love!



Explorer

A Dan Ltd, £29.99 A darn good joystick. It's microswitched, tabletop and has speed turbo fire and slow motion facilities. This gets a Pitt recommendation for sure!

Turbo Pad

Active, £12.99 This little blinder has three extra buttons for turbo fire compared to its official counterpart. Looks like — although not as good — as the Sega pad, but it comes a close second. Quite responsive, the buttons are fine.

Super Sega Joystick

Active, £19.99 A big table top jobby this one. With three fire buttons and two dials for a choice of slow or fast play via the Speed-up facility, it comes complete with LEDs to show the function is in operation.

The stick's responsive, but I don't like the way the buttons are placed. The choice of speeds is a nice addition. For use on both the MD and MS. Not bad for the price, though a touch cumbersome. .

Gizmo

Beeshu, £44.95 Extremely expensive, the stick is hard to control and as for the Day-glo dots, give me a break! There are hundreds of 'em! It's a stereo joystick with controls for either left- or right-handed folk. Dial-a-speed/slow motion facility. Not bad, but the price puts me off!

Viper

Beeshu, £14.95 It looks a bit tacky, but don't be put off, it's a really good joystick. Microswitched, with two buttons for left- or right-handers, there's also an extra long cord, so you can walk round the room while playing. Controls well and the fire buttons are fast and responsive. There's the usual slow motion thingy thrown in too. Recommended. Also works on the Master System.

Striker

Beeshu, £29.95 A great joypad with detachable control extensions to turn the control pad into a mini-joystick. It has a stereo plug and turbo fire buttons which work well. It's responsive and one I'd recommend. (Stereo plug? Are you serious? — Ed). (Yep, the lead plugs into the joystick port *and* the headphone socket. The joypad itself has a headphone socket so you plug your headphones into it, rather than the Mega Drive. Useful if you've only got short-lead Walkman headphones —AP.) (You live and learn —Ed.)

'Excuse me, Mister, have you seen my Zoomer?'

Camerica: (0533) 813606
Spectravideo/Quickjoy: (081) 900 0024
Konix: (0495) 350101
Quickshot: (081) 365 1993
Beeshu: (0262) 601006
Active/A Dan Ltd: (081) 752 0260
Datel Electronics: (0782) 744324
Jong Rich: (010) 337 227 8917
Product 2000 Ltd: (081) 644 0033
Happ Controls (Illinois): (708) 593 6130.

'No, but I know a man who has...'

Turbo Profa

Jong Rich, £17.00 All the way from sunny France, this smart, responsive stick has eight microswitches. Marketed by Infogrames, it should be out as we speak.

SG Fighter

Quickjoy, £14.95 The buttons are a little awkward to get used to, but apart from that, it's a fairly good gadget, although try before you buy.



add-ons

well 'ard add-ons

MASTER SYSTEM BITS

Rapid Fire Unit

Sega, £5.99 If your Tommy Gun needs a bit of a boost, plug this directly into your joystick and blast some ass! Both buttons on the unit give super fire power. An excellent device for tackling some of those well 'ard shoot-'em-ups. Thoroughly recommended for any wimp who wants to turn into a budding Arnold Schwarzenegger!

Light Phaser

Sega, £29.99 Sounds sci-fi and Trekkie, but if you've ever fancied being a rootin', tootin' gun-slinger, grab hold of this well wicked pistol and plug it into your Master System. It does away with all those pesky crosshairs, just point and shoot! You need a very steady hand, so no downing three gin and tonics before! It's not incredibly accurate, but reasonable value and certainly enjoyable.

3-D Goggles

Sega, £49.99 A total waste of money! Plug-in goggles that allow a greater perspective on such games as *Out Run 3D*. Not worth bothering with, there are very few games you can use these with.

MASTER SYSTEM JOYSTICKS AND JOYPADS

SG Commander

Sega, £9.95 A great control pad, it contains an excellent rapid fire facility and is really responsive. Great value for money at under a tenner. Miss out at your peril.

Handle Controller

Sega, £39.99 Those with a degree in flying should master this in a moment. Supposed to look like a pilot's control column, it's a bit weak-willed and not very responsive. Buy the SG Commander and be done with it!

Control Pad

Sega, £6.95 We all know what this one looks like. It does the job, but it's hardly very swank. Didn't like the wobbly control pad, but the buttons all work okay.

Control Stick

Sega, £14.95 A progression from the pad, but I'm not impressed. There are plenty of better sticks on the market. It's responsive and should last a long time, but take a look at the others before you buy.

Freedom Stick

Camerica: £39.99 Not bad, although not the most responsive of the bunch. A bit cumbersome to use but fits to your tabletop quite snugly. If you want your waggler big and thick, buy a Camerica Freedom Stick!. It rhymes too...

Freedom Connection

Spectravideo, £19.99 Ever fancied walking round the room with a joystick in your sweaty hand, only to be pulled up short by the doggoned lead? With this device you live out your fantasy. Not a joy-stick, but a remote control gadget that doesn't plug it into your Master System! It's only just appeared in the shops and it's MEGA! Buy if you can find one!

Speedking

Konix, £12.99 Good looking, tough, durable and responsive handheld joystick with fire buttons positioned under your trigger finger. Autofire facility included. Should live up to long, hard waggling — one of the better sticks and recommended.

Game Controller

Quickshot, £8.99 You can rely on Quickshot to come up with a winner. It's a spooky looking thing to be sure. Imagine the front of a bicycle and you've got the general idea! Very responsive and less than £10, can't be bad!

Ultimate Speedstick

Beeshu, £37.95 Sometimes, the more expensive sticks aren't always the best. It isn't very responsive, although Beeshu have given consideration to left- and right-handed players. Also included is a speed control auto-fire mechanism.

Zoomer

Beeshu, £44.95 Wins the Incredibly Weird Name Award. Yet another stick that's obviously been swiped from an air-craft. Pretty dire, though, and not that responsive. Has auto fire and dial-a-speed buttons. Only worth buying if you've got loads of flight sims and racing games.

Flashfire

Beeshu, £9.95 Also a bit sluggish to control, this one, and the fire button really hurts your fingers if you have to press it over a long period. Not a personal favourite, I'm afraid, but above average if you ain't got too much dosh.

COMING TO A PLUG NEAR YOU

Megaplay

A device to let you plug in ten MD games at the same time and access them one by one, thus saving ergs of energy. Clever, eh? No news on a release date,though.

Jet Range

Product 2000 Two Sega compatible joy-sticks have been promised, the Superjet and the Megajet. No release date.

Mega Star

Spectravideo A see-through stick which promises a real arcade feel. Seven microswitches and a solid steel shaft retail at around £28. More info when we get it.

Game Genie

Code Masters Plug it in the MD, then slot in a cart for infinite lives, level skip and so on. Unlike the Datel cart it's is supposed to find cheat codes for it self, but will come with 1000 codes anyway, around Spring time.

Foot Pedal Controller

Spectravideo If your hand action's wearing out try this foot controller on car sims. Three controls represent clutch, brake and accelerator. A great idea you might have to wait for.

Competition Pro Genesis Pad

Happ Controls Compatible with the Mega Drive, this smart look-ing control pad has three buttons for turbo fire and a slow motion feature. Pad's responsive and direction controls work really well. One to look out for (**check out USA Here 'n' Now for more details**).



Golden Axe is back; bigger and badder than before. PAUL MELLERICK squeezes into a loin cloth as big as his head and goes for another slash.

The original *Axe* was not only praised as the best beat-'em-up on the Mega Drive, but also the best arcade conversion ever — boasting additional levels not in the coin-op!

The sequel is a completely original game, written specifically for the MD and bound to be a huge seller.

The plotline is that the Golden Axe has been nicked, again, this time by Dark Guld and his clan. Once more there's only three people in the whole kingdom mad enough to attempt its recovery: Ax-Battler the Barbarian, Tyris-Flare the Amazon and Gilius Thunderhead the Dwarf.

Each has their own characteristics (speed, strength), magic and special moves. As in the original one of the most impressive aspects of the game is the huge range of combat moves, all superbly animated.

For example when you get a villain in range, you don't simply give him a quick bop on the head and that's it. Oh no, you give him a sword slash across the chest, bash him twice on the head with the butt of your weapon then either kick him in the stomach of throw him over your head!

Unfortunately the villains can be equally nasty, but it all adds up to one of the most involving combat games ever, guaranteed to get the adrenaline flowing — especially when your 'friend' keeps hitting you by 'accident'!

If you want a stick, fun beat-'em-up, it's unmissable

Dragon fire

The game's set over six levels of mainly horizontal scrolling action leading to a final battle with Dark Guld in his chamber. At each level's end there's a bonus stage where you can earn spells to restore energy and gain magic power by chasing down little magicians.

These fellas also scurry around the main game levels, but unlike the harmless critters in the original, they pack a mean punch and must be hit quickly!

Magic power is an important aspect. Activating it summons a special effect knocking all the baddies down — inflicting an amount of damage dependent on how many spells you've collected.

The least powerful magic is Gilius Thunderhead's boulder magic, next up is Ax-Battler with his whirlwind magic, but the real showstopper is Tyris's, which at the most powerful setting has a huge dragon materialising out of the air.

One new feature is that you set how much magic you use by holding down the fire button till you get the setting you want.

Tail spin

The enemies are markedly tougher this time around, some have tails to knock you around with, others grab you by the head and hurl you to the ground. You must also face the Bizarrians, creatures ridden by baddies such as the Chicken Leg which uses its tail to attack. The Green Dragon kicks its hind legs and the Fire Dragon breathes fire. A quick attack can dismount the villain freeing the saddle for you to climb aboard.

Golden Axe II is no radical departure from the original, the attacking style's the same and the challenge not radically different (or even bigger): However, while the game isn't original enough to be a really worthwhile buy for those who have the prequel, it *is* an improvement.

The backgrounds and sound are enhanced, difficulty improved (marginally) and the enemies are better drawn, and more imaginative in the first place. So if you've the original ignore this, but if you've just got a Mega Drive and want a really slick, fun beat-'em-up, *Golden Axe II* is unmissable. **PAUL**

SPECIAL MOVES

All the characters can run (by pressing twice on the joypad) and jump and make a flying attack. There are also character-specific moves: by attacking while running the Amazon does a flying kick, the Barbarian body-slams and the Dwarf heatbutts. Pressing attack and leap button simultaneously gives a special move: a back-flip by the Amazon, an upper-swing followed by a rear stab for the Barbarian and the Dwarf leaps on his axe and swings around!

GOLDEN A



(Above Left) Well you've heard about the headless chicken, here's the headless knight, he folloes you around, god knows how though. (Above) This guy obviusly ate somthing that disagrred with him.

The original was one of the best two-player games around, an incredibly playable beat-'em-up with great graphics.

The sequel's even better, with tougher opponents attacking in greater numbers. Also the big monsters are now a lot faster and don't just hang around waiting for you to do a flying kick. Nevertheless this is still no massive challenge, *Axe* veterans will be able to complete it in a few sessions as gameplay is so similar — and levels far from huge. It's a fun game, though, and there's a good 'Duel' option which is simple knock-down, drag-out fight between two players against a static backdrop.

STU

Inside the 'Dragons throat cave' all this nice red screnery shouldn't put you off despatching those skeletons to a terrible death!

AXE II

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: TBA
- MS: TBA
- MEMORY: 512K
- PLAYERS: 1-2
- PRICE: £34.99

SF Rating

85% PRESENTATION
- Change controls, alter life and magic settings

86% VISUALS
- Great characters brilliantly animated

76% SONICS
- Decent tunes and SFX, but not brilliant

89% PLAYABILITY
- Great hack 'n' slash action

80% LASTABILITY
- Tougher than the original, but still too easy

84% FORCE
- A great game to play (if you haven't got the original)



RAMPART

Blood runs red and thick when Middle Ages meets Missile Command in a coin-op conversion that caught PAUL MELLERICK in the crossfire.

Rampart has the distinction of being one of the very few original games to hit the arcades in the last few years. While the usual flood of shoot-'em-ups and beat-'em-ups get churned out every year, Atari had the guts to launch a different style of gameplay. Shock! Horror! Could the normal arcade goer cope?

The graphics were certainly not spectacular, and the MS isn't going to visually dazzle anyone either. But the gameplay is a novel and addictive crossbreeding of *Missile Command*-style cannon fire and puzzle-game wall-building.

Going down in flames

At game's start you choose which of three castles to kick off with — the computer then surrounds it with walls and gives you some cannon to place inside the fortified citadel. Now you're ready to face invading ships; a small flotilla of galleons sailing for the coastline with their cannon laying down a lethal bombardment.

This is the *Missile Command* section with you moving a cursor and pressing fire to send a cannonball on its way. You can't hit incoming shells but instead sink the ships, using your judgment to aim ahead of moving (and heavily armed) targets.

When you've finished you need to repair your damaged castle walls — which is where the *Tetris* skills come in handy. A randomly generated wall-piece appears for you to use in repairing the gaps made by your opponents. Use [A] to rotate the piece and [B] to drop it.

There are an unlimited number of pieces, but time's running out fast. If you fail to completely enclose your castle it's game over.

Veteran players will not only fortify their first castle, but use the pieces to wall in other castles and expand their territory. This gives more room to site new cannon — awarded quite frequently — and improves your chances of survival. As long as just one castle is fully walled you get to continue even if your first castle's walls are blown to bits.

The coin-op fans should appreciate this slick conversion

Survive three waves of attacking ship, and you progress to the next level. This shows a map of the land you're defending and you can choose your next location, which starts the process over again. You need to rethink strategy because the scenery has changed and the ships can attack from different positions.

According to Domark there's a heckuva lot of scenery to get through and the mix of strategy, puzzle action and gunfire is very addictive, but I wish there was more variety.

Satisfying sadism

The Master System version is graphically very close to the arcade, but then the machine didn't have superior graphics in the first place. The sound's limited, restricted to explosions and such like which are very realistic, and a grating little ditty.

But it's the gameplay which appeals to you in this game, not too slow to be annoying and not too fast to be confusing. You really have to work at thinking out your next move.

The game also has a two player-mode which replaces the ships with another strip of land with three more castles. After each player chooses his starting castle, the walls go up, cannon are placed and action begins.

This is probably the best part of the game, involving lots of satisfyingly sneaky tactics — ie don't aim to destroy a wall completely, just put in lots of difficult-to-repair holes! And when you win, a picture of your opponent having his head chopped off appears on screen. Satisfying!

Rampart coin-op fans should appreciate this professional conversion. Others should give this a go before mocking the graphics, in two-player mode particularly it's great fun.



The battle screen where both sides direct their cannon fire using star-shaped cursors. Level those castle walls with a fusillade of cannonballs.

In solo mode you face attack from ships rather than castles. Sink the galleons before they land troops.

The building screen where castle walls must be sealed up before time runs out. The blue player (above) has suffered huge breaches at top right, but two castles are sealed — note the blue showing secured territory.

Rampart may look dull as moat water but has an addictive bite worthy of the meanest croc. The unique mix of gameplay is highly compelling, a perfect test of arcade reflexes and quick tactical thinking. The only drawback is that in solo-mode the attack waves are always ships, a little more variety here would've gone a long way. However if you've a friend to compete with, *Rampart* is all but unmissable. Using your cannon to create the most awkward damage is truly sadistic, although gloating rarely goes on for long with such little time to repair your own walls. In short, superb! ***STU***

- PRODUCER: DOMARK/TENGEN
- GG: TBA
- MS: TBA
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1-2
- PRICE: £29.99

SF Rating

75% PRESENTATION
- No intro, limited options, death sequence

85% VISUALS
- Very close to the arcade coin-op

65% SONICS
- Sparse music, realistic explosive etc

82% PLAYABILITY
- Refreshingly original

78% LASTABILITY
- Initial fun but somewhat repetitive solo

80% FORCE
- A good conversion and very playable



ALIEN STORM

Wot! No sexy Karla! No sexy two-player mode?! Does this latest Sega conversion have any whatevers left over to kick up a storm? ALAN GREEN checks it out...

After glitzing up their spaceships in *Super Space Invaders*, the aliens have gone all subtle for this latest invasion: disguising themselves as conifer trees, bins and postboxes! Their mean and evil intentions are unchanged, though, walk by and they sneakily switch into their true forms: jelly blobs, snakes, walking heads and pizza-monsters.

So who ya gonna call? Yeah, it's time for the Alien Busters featuring not Bill Murray and Co, but instead macho-man Gordon, all rippling muscles and lethal flamethrower, and his metal buddy Slammer — tooled up with an electric whip!

By some mysterious law of hardware, the coin-op's three-player mode has diminished to two (on the Mega Drive) and now just one on Master System. Also missing is the choice of Karla in her skintight bodysuit — all green, eco and anti-sexist.

You may control either of the two remaining heroes. In addition to their respective flame thrower and whip, they're equipped with special attack techniques (activated by pressing both fire buttons).

Gordon can unleash a ballistic missile, and Slammer dramatically blows himself up — and even more remarkably instantly reconstructs himself, too. These specialities are effectively smart bombs, destroying all hostile forces on screen.

Mean streets

It's pretty vicious out there in this blast-'em and beat-'em coin-op conversion. Four missions provide horizontally scrolling street scenes to battle through, fending off aliens, and some kind of special challenge in between.

The first has you fighting along the city street. The aliens, in all their bizarre shapes, attack in groups of three. Your man can move all over the 3-D perspective screen and make acrobatic leaps across the street. Get into the right position, blitz an alien and the screen scrolls on to the next villain.

The graphics give the Mega Drive a run for its money

Any misjudgment in your attack may result in an energy-sapping strike from the opposition. Maintain your life and energy levels to survive.

Next level takes the form of a 3-D shooting scene, taking place in a shop where the aliens are hanging out in force. It's basically a case of aligning a cross-hair to blast the rapidly moving freaks as they pop up from behind shelves and along aisles. Complete this and progress through fast scrolling subway scenes to the warehouse and other levels, eventually reaching the aliens' spaceship itself.

Bustin' pretty

Graphically, *Alien Storm* is very imaginative and pretty. The sprites are all colourful and carefully drawn, especially the Busters themselves, whose fighting moves are well depicted. Also the mutating human beings add an element of surprise.

Some animation is jerky, and there's quite a bit of flashing going on when many enemies are onscreen, but this doesn't detract from the arcade feel too badly. Sound FX and the tune are similarly competent, though not startling.

And it's great to play. While a tough battle even on the first level, you won't get frustrated. There's always something attacking you, so fast reactions are required as you jump and shoot your way through.

Plus the different aliens attack in their own particular ways, so a tactical approach is required putting *Alien Storm* above many more mindless games of its kind.

It's very addictive, and the game continue option helps overcome any initial frustration with the difficulty of it (without revealing the higher levels too soon).

Certainly its major downfall is its lack of a two-player option. You either control Gordon or Slammer, but control of both, as is common in fighting games of this ilk, is not possible.

This may put off fans of *Double Dragon* and such games, who want to beat up the baddies with a friend (I like using my friends as weapons).

If you're unbothered by this deficiency yu won't be disappointed. It's got a good arcade feel and challenges enough not to give way too soon.



Despite all the omissions, *Alien Storm* is a surprisingly slick game with some very good graphics. The side-on view action is fast and very well drawn, of course there's flicker, but the enemies all have novel attack methods and your characters punch and kick if baddies get too close, or ammo runs out. The fast-scrolling running section is just as good, if not better — the screen really moves *fast* and it's great fun. The 3-D shoot-'em-up scene is tougher, but again the graphics are superb giving the Mega drive game a real run for its money. Gigeresque aliens are suitably repulsive and leap out at you with gusto!

Alien Storm has little that's original about it, and four missions aren't a huge amount, but there's three different game-styles, nifty programming and real coin-op polish. **STU**

Use your whip to annihilate those alien scum. But watch out for the green 'thing', he'll come from behind (ooh! Nasty)

Taking down the xenos in your local Co-Op. Use the cursor to guide laser-fire and watch those shelves blow apart!

On the left our hero does a Linford Christie through a swarm of horrendous aliens. Super-slick scrolling and minimal flicker make this one of the most impressive scenes in this slick arcade conversion. Quick-fire reactions are essential for survival in this alien invasion!

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: TBA
- MD: OUT NOW
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £29.99

SF Rating

80% PRESENTATION
- 3 continue-plays, useful game options

76% VISUALS
- Arcade feel, often flashy and juddery

75% SONICS
- Reasonable tunes and adequate FX

82% PLAYABILITY
- A feel to it that'll have you fighting

74% LASTABILITY
- Four missions but varied sub-sections

80% FORCE
- If you don't mind playing one at a time it's a good 'un



Magical gems, wealth beyond imagination, PAUL MELLERICK checks out whether it's the real deal, or just a load of old Ratner's.

JEWEL

Indulge me a moment while I bore you with the scenario. Mythgard... what a place, lovely buildings, nice friendly people, quiet and peaceful, great place for a holiday...

Unfortunately, as is always the case, Mr Jardine the Mad and his Dark Legions (yawn!) would like to make Mythgard their own. This caused the 12 masters of the elements to make an appearance, whereupon they were soundly thrashed, except for four of them (who hid under the table) namely: Earth, Wind, Fire and Water.

These four elements decided to pool their resources and created the Holy Blade with which to destroy Jardine and his legions in the great Final Battle.

You take control of some nutter/hero type with more muscles than sense and a maddening desire to find the Holy Blade. Now of course this guy has a special power which separates him from us normal Joe's; when rings come into his possession (he starts with two and gets more as he carries on) he can use them to increase or change his firepower.

All in all not a bad game, but no sparkler either

Dead ringer

Pressing start pauses the game and accesses a screen where you can change the rings being carried. For instance, when you start you have a fire ring and a barrier ring, one on each hand. Next you collect a speed-up ring — used with fire this gives a longer range fireball.

Other spells include earthquake, ice dagger and fire wall. There's a fire button for each hand, with the third being for jump.

Rings are dropped by creatures you've killed, but no matter how many rings you pick up you can only use four, putting two on each hand. Experimentation is vital to find a good combination. Also available are apples and such like to boost your life energy.

Terror birds

The game's structure is very much a standard arcade adventure, walk forward bashing all in your way with an obligatory end-of-level guardian who's despatched to advance onwards.

The limited strategy element is an interesting addition, but the graphics are dull, lifeless, with — for the Megadrive — disappointing backgrounds and the main sprite's animation is very limited. Sadly, sound is poor also — almost like an MS game.

Although unoriginal, the gameplay still challenges. The first level is anr overripe forest — lots of garish greenery, including fire-spitting plants. You also have to take on lethal birds — fortunately you can fire upwards as well as sideways — and explore simplistic buildings. At the end of it there's an anti-climatic battle against a snow leopard, rather far from home!

The next level's a good deal tougher. Set in the desert, there are aggressive worm creatures, scorpion-rats half-buried in the sand and nasty cacti!

This level's bony end-level creature's a lot harder to dispose of, but nothing like the fiery phoenix at the end of level three. Set in a forest, the main villains on this level are pteradactyls which really test your reactions.

Jewel Master won't set the world alight. For newer owners it might provide a nice game for a while, however, older and more experienced gamers might find the action overly familiar. **PAUL**

Once past the first section's blinding greenery, the other levels are better and quite interesting. You're a bit of a wuss, though, practically useless without any extra powers. I prefer a game where the unaided character still has some chance. Still, I enjoy collecting rings (must be the Sonic in me), and some of the power-ups giveuseful options, though the most useful asset is boring old fireball. Once powered up the revolting enemies are utterly brainless and aren't too difficult to wipe out (unless you're Paul). All in all not a bad game, but no sparkler either. ***CLAIRE***

As you can see the first level is disgustingly green, put up with this and the backdrops get better. (Below)



Watch out when walking under the head, and fire at that walking Pot Noodle. (Left)

(Above) Kill 'bony', bit by bit and he'll soon be 'armless (Ha, Ha) and below see our hero taking a walk in the park on a Sunday afternoon.

MASTER

Rings on your fingers, la la la. (Old TV programme), select your rings to give different powers. (Right)

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: TBA
- MS: TBA
- MEMORY: 512K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £34.99

SF Rating

82% PRESENTATION
- Control options, music, 3 levels, nice intro

77% VISUALS
- Dull main sprite, backgrounds improve later

55% SONICS
- Japanese type bleeping tunes, boring

75% PLAYABILITY
- Standard arcade adventure action

73% LASTABILITY
- Levels offer limited variety

74% FORCE
- Average may appeal to newer Mega Drive owners



Reviewed!

JOE MONTANA II: Sports Talk Football

The world's best quarterback is back with a gob as big as a ball, and more chat than trousers? PAUL MELLERICK girds his loins on the gridiron...

Cor, this game don't half rabbit on. The first few phrases are well impressive, the guy sounds as if he's got a bit of a cold, but it's undoubtedly the best digitized speech yet. You expect him soon to shut up as the MD runs out of memory — he doesn't, though, instead he begins a full commentary...

'He's looking... better hurry... look out!... he's sacked back at the four yard line!'

Okay *Joe* can certainly fill your earhole, but how is he on the pitch, is this game to face down *John Madden '92* at the Super Bowl?

There's certainly plenty of options; choose from 28 teams, then play a match either as a one-off exhibition or as the start of a league (complete with passwords for saving your position). You can also turn the weather on/off, shut up the commentator (hurrah!), vary game length (20, 40 or 60 minutes), select game difficulty and bring in superstars from other teams using the Dream Team option.

Once you've thrashed the CPU you might like to bring in a friend, either for straightforward competition or co-operation, with you both on the same team — one player controlling the quarterback and the other player controlling whoever he wishes.

The ultimate American football sim remains unthreatened

Zoom power

Phew! Set the options and you can finally get into the action. From the kick-off the game gives you a birds-eye perspective showing about 40 yards of the pitch. The look is very impressive, very arcade-like with cartoon-style animation.

Choosing a play is very much like *John Madden* with each player able to flick through play diagrams. And when play starts you can change your play with Audibles, using the fire buttons to select from the last three plays shown.

When you 'snap' the ball into play you must pull back the quarterback and select a receiver by pressing [B], then pass the ball. As soon as you throw the ball the screen highlights the area where the ball will land and then zooms into where you must catch it. Unfortunately this zooming isn't shown, the screen just blanks for a second, then you're back in action — and the abrupt change of view can be confusing, costing valuable seconds. I successfully made only about 20% of my passes to begin with. There's also a standard punting (kicking) option.

Dream Team?

Although *Joe* is a hit graphically and sonically, gameplay isn't up to the standard of *John Madden*. The control method is very tough to get to grips with, the 'zooming' is irksome and the speech ultimately irritating. The inclusion of a league is very welcome, but lacks a playoff system, and while the Dream Team selection sounds good, I didn't find the superstars made that much difference!

The game might provide some enjoyment to arcadesters with its surface glitz, it's got plenty of challenge and is fairly playable — however the ultimate American Football sim remains unthreatened, this doesn't come close and thus *Madden '92* is the one to go for. But if you're a real fanatic, *Joe* is probably worth getting for the league option and different game perspective.

PAUL

The play selection screen, borrows heavily from John Madden. Use A,B or C to choose your play.

John Madden **is so well established the competition faces a tough task trying to overhaul it, especially as everyone's used to the superb controls.** ***Joe*** **lacks the automatic computer assistance of the EA game, the controls aren't as good and the 'zoom-in' can be confusing. However, unlike Paul I quite enjoyed the game. It's fiddly at times and the list of plays aren't as comprehensive, but it's got some good graphics and sound — the panic of fast-action plays is certainly well recreated! It's not as playable as** ***John Madden*****, it's more confusing and hectic, but fun all the same and worth checking out once you've won** ***John Madden*** **play-offs for the hundredth time.**

STU



Your quarterback gets the ball and must pass to the highlighted receiver.

KICKING FOR THE FIELD GOAL.: Here you have full power, straight ahead, will in go through the posts or not.

The options screen, choose your team, length of play and to turn the weather on or off (?)

- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: TBA
- MS: TBA
- MEMORY: 1024K
- PLAYERS: 1-2
- PRICE: £34.99

SF RATING

64% PRESENTATION
- Loadsa options — see text

66% VISUALS
- Great close-in graphics

97% SONICS
- Incredible speech, lousy music

72% PLAYABILITY
- The control method is a bit tough

79% LASTABILITY
- League option provides a good life span

76% FORCE
- Awkward control system but still fun with awesome sound!



Reviewed!

After such stormin' success with radically different 8- and 16-bit versions of *Castle Of Illusion*, Sega are at it again with Donald Duck and this time the adventures really are completely different.

In both games Donald's nephews have been kidnapped, only on 8-bit it's not Big Bad Pete doing the 'napping but Magica — a slinky brunette. Her avaricious heart is set on the Lucky Dimes given the nephews by Uncle Scrooge.

The scene's set in a neat intro showing Donald getting in his plane to rescue the kidnappees. Press START and it turns out Huey, Louie and Dewey are being held in the USA, Mexico and South America. Thankfully the game allows you to attempt the levels in whichever order you prefer, with just four lives and three continue-plays to see you through.

The States is a good place to start, even if its cutesy forest landscape is packed with unfriendly fauna. One nice touch is the spiders which dangle on invisible threads, wallop them with your mallet and they go swinging off screen, apparently dead, then swing back meaner than ever!

The platform element of the game really comes into play in the second half of the level, with — another nice touch — gophers' snores lifting leaves for Donald to jump off. Fast reactions are needed to avoid falling into bottomless chasms. Fortunately the end-level bear is a walk over so long as you've got a bit of energy left.

Olé olé!

Onto the next stage — Mexico is semi-desert, with plenty of nasty critters out to get our brave fowl. Piranha fish, coiled snakes and buzzards are a problem, but help is at hand in the form of kindly turtles who carry you across sections of river.

Fall into the river, and Donald's in for a tricky section of underwater diving, with hungry fish and falling stalactites. A ferocious lion guards the second nephew here. He's a pussy cat compared to Mexico's finale — a fearsome Aztec god!

And that's it!?

Erhh, no way. Utilizing my incredible games-playing skills while everyone else was whingeing, I completed all three levels, and there *is* more! Three whole new levels in fact, all of which must be completed before you confront Magica in her castle.

Amazingly, these levels are even better; Hawaii boasts volcanoes, angry natives and scorching temperatures that make Donald gasp for breath whenever he pauses. Antarctica features leaping swordfish, snowball-throwing yetis and a driving wind which pushes you around, randomly changing direction. Back in warmer climes, there's Egypt with a pyramid to explore, disappearing platforms and a puzzle room!

Unemployed plumbers?

Gameplay isn't amazingly innovative, it's just pure *Mario Bros* platforms action, but it *is* superbly executed, ensuring addictivity through clever design — and brill graphics. In fact this game is pure toon town, superb in its colour and crystal clear outlines.

Donald is amazing; he waddles along blinking with his hat ribbon flying, he gets all steamed up if left alone and the way he swims is pure comedy. I also love that mallet, press fire and he bangs away at the villains with typically Donald meaness. Later on you can upgrade to a Frisbee, but the mallet's most fun! It *is* difficult to play, but the locations are different enough to make sure you won't get bored with one rescue. It's also good how the game's split, so getting through the first three levels is tough but when he you do it there are infinite continue-plays for the three new levels. Who needs some overweight plumbers trudging across a blurry, yellow screen when Donald's around?

Master System Donald

GG and MS games are usually so close we thought reviewing this late arrival would be a blast, but we were wrong! Those superb, crisp GG graphics too often look gaudy and blocky on a TV — this game seems designed for the GG's LCD screen!

Gameplay, too, is seriously altered, there are infinite continues right from the start, but you've only got two 'chances' for surviving enemy hits. Collecting stars no longer restores 'chances' — they're just a bonus, giving you brief invulnerability if you get five of them.

This makes the game a lot harder when the going gets tough; there's no way to regain lost energy making death inevitable at times. Another added difficulty is when you get hit your current weapon *is* lost!

On the plus side levels *are* bigger and some neat new touches, like a fast-scrolling sharp slope with lethal boulders and swooping eagles, help.

MS *Donald* is reasonable fun, but after playing Donald on the GG, the MS version seems too tough and frustrating — I certainly know which one I'd rather play! **CLAIRE**

THE LUCKY DIME CAPER S

DONALD DU

CLAIRE MORLEY raves about her Disney extravaganza on Game Gear but falls fowl of the MS version, which bowls her out for a duck.





- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: OUT
- MS: OUT
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £24.99

SF Rating

92% PRESENTATION
- Cute intro, choice of levels.

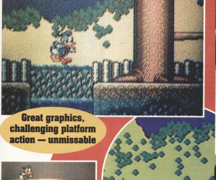
94% VISUALS
- Funny, detailed — the best yet?

83% SONICS
- Reasonable tune and spot FX.

92% PLAYABILITY
- Classic platform action.

91% LASTABILITY
- Plenty, especially for wimpo editors!

92% FORCE
- A classic which wipes the floor with the Mario Bros



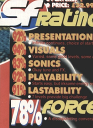


Great graphics, challenging platform action — unmissable





...TARRING ...UCK



- PRODUCER: SEGA
- GG: OUT
- MD: OUT
- MEMORY: 256K
- PLAYERS: 1
- PRICE: £32.99

SF Rating

92% PRESENTATION
- Infinite continues, choice of starts.

94% VISUALS
- Varied, some good levels, some dull.

83% SONICS
- Okay tune and FX.

92% PLAYABILITY
- Starts easy, but irksome energy system.

91% LASTABILITY
- 7 levels provide big challenge

78% FORCE
- A dissapointing conversion



Reviewed!

SOLITAIRE POKER



'Gerremoff!' yells PAUL MELLERICK, the man with more chips on his shoulder than a takeaway Chinese chippie.

Poker: Wild West gunslingers, Las Vegas showgirls naughty strip variations. Poker *is* glamour, yet when all's said and done, it's not a complicated game, the only real brain work being in remembering the combinations.

For the greenhorn, Poker's a game usually played with five cards in a hand, although there are as many variants as Heinz varieties. The idea is to get your five cards to collate into a decent 'hand' using any of the ten combinations.

In real life a lot of excitement comes from keeping a 'poker' face when you've got a Full House — and winning real money. Hopefully most of you aren't about to mortgage the family home for a few thrills, so Sega have added a few more rules to complicate gameplay. The basic idea revolves around a solitaire set-up placing cards into a grid, to make a poker combination.

Tetris poker

Your main screen has four rows of cards, a 5x5 grid in which to put the them, and scoring section. There are the normal 52 cards and a Joker (which is wild, very useful in the bottom corner). You pick a card and place it in the grid, where it falls to the bottom.

This continues till the grid's filled. When a combination is made it doesn't disappear, so you need to be careful where you place each card. This is where the puzzle factor comes in as you see only the next card at the bottom of each pile.

Challenging and different, options lift it into a new league

To finish a level accumulate enough points(displayed at the top of the screen). Any left over are taken away from the target for the next screen, leaving you less points to get. This makes the first levels easy (on one, I needed zero points to pass), but this isn't bad, since you must accrue points that allow you to beat later levels.

If the music irritates, press START and select from seven different cute tunes.

Taxing dues

Gameplay's enthralling but if you don't like poker you may not enjoy this at all. However if you have even a passing interest, *Solitaire Poker* makes a nice change of pace, and taxes the old grey matter.

A plus point is the number of options. The one-player enrols you in three different games each containing 15 rounds (not easy), but with infinite continues.

Choose from three displays: VIEW-1 turns up a card from the bottom of the piles; VIEW-2 turns up three cards and VIEW-3 rotates between one card, three and all the cards.

TRY-1 mode is one level only, in which you try to score the most points possible, with play four options: EASY shows one card, but you need 11,000 points to finish it; NORMAL shows 12 cards, but you need 13,000 points; HARD shows you all six cards but you need 15,000 and CASINO shows none, and you need 9,000 points (very tough).

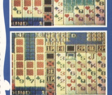
There's a two-option, two-player game against the clock. Type-A plays like one-player, except that each time you get a combination some time is added as well as points and the player with the most points is declared the winner. This is a best-of-five competition.

The Type-B game's much more fun, and allows you to hide the number of cards your opponent can see, the better the combination the more cards are hidden.

The gameplay is very challenging and a different variation on usual puzzle games (*Tetris*, *Columns* etc.), but the tremendous number of options lifts it into a new league. In short, splashing £25 on this pack is no gamble and is a must for all puzzle/poker fanatics.

PAUL

Graphics and sonics are both excellent, and the variations endless, so you can't get sick of the backdrop or the soundtrack. The playing cards are in unconventional shades making the game even easier to get to grips with. If you are a poker fan you'll love it, and if you aren't, you soon will be. *CLAIRE*



A good tactic is to build flushes, flush after flush after flush. A bit like Saturday morning after a Friday night curry.





GUTTER SNIPE

He's lean, he's mean, a bit of a rotter, cos he's lived most his life down in the gutter. But he tells it straight and shoots with wit all because he's a bit of a...

Back again, so what did you expect, that they woulda fired me? No way hosay. Two days on sale and the letters were pouring in — wet through, what a loada drips you are! Some were nice, though, and natch, those are the one's I'm printing. If you've got something NICE to say, write to GUTTER SNIPE, SEGA FORCE, Europress Impact, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW — and for the wimps who don't like using words like 'gutter' on their envelopes, you could always put something NICE in the start, like... 'The Letters Editor'. Okay?

Yob v Snipe

Dear Gutrot,
I want to know who's the best out of Yob from (C&VG) and SEGA FORCE's one and only amazing, big cheese himself Gutter Snipe? One of my mates said that Yob is the best and Gutter Snipe is a pleb-head. (I duffed him up after he said that!). Oh yeah, give me some Master System games... PLEASE, or I'll duff you up. If you **don't** send me some, I'll switch to using a Nintendo.
P.S. My bruver 'ates you!
Clive Fothergill, Rochester, Kent

Yob doesn't exactly live up to his C&VG image. He's actually a 33-year old car park attendant from Frinton-on-Sea. Of course I'm the best. I've got all my own teeth, I help little old ladies across the motorway and I don't bite the heads off jelly babies. As for your mate, lock him in a dark room with a copy of the *Reader's Digest* — the ULTIMATE torture! As to free games — naff off and get yer own.

Technical Tease

Dear Gutter,
I'm 13 and had a Master System for two years. I bought and read *Sega Power* regularly and I now enjoy SEGA FORCE very much. I'm saving for a Mega Drive but only have a black and white television. Could you please tell me if I can connect a monitor to a Mega Drive and if so, which one? Do I have to have any special leads?
My Dad has a 105 Megabyte Amiga 2000, which has a Commodore 1084S monitor, is it possible to connect the MD to this? I look forward to next month's mag, keep up the good work.
Marc Lambert, Gosport, Hants

Cheers Marc. Yep, it is possible to connect a Mega Drive to a monitor so long's the monitor has SCART, (an oblong socket at the back of the monitor which allows the input of a signal, bypassing filters and allowing a clearer image). British Mega Drives don't come with SCART so you'll have to buy this separately. The good news is, your MD will work on a 1084S monitor, as long as there's a good old SCART thingy at the back. Any more probs, drop me a line!

Royal invites work...

Yo Snipe dude,
How's it hangin'? Do you *have* anything hanging? If you do, I'll come down and be rather nasty. Now then, you didn't exactly give a straight answer last issue to that Michael J. 'Mr Nice' Fox, did you? How do you get a letter printed in the first issue of a mag? (by the way, this is only the second letter I've written to a magazine). I like your mag a lot and I'll be sending in a constant supply of pics, tips, letters and bottle tops, so you'll have to print one or two hundred of my letters sooner or later!
Paul S. Barlow, Chorley, Lancs

I've plenty hanging, though it's none of your business, except for



Andrew Matthews from Great Sutton, South Wirral, sent me this rendering of Sonic reading SEGA FORCE. Sonic's popular — I've been inundated with hedgehogs!. Meanwhile, the pratt who forgot what to say, Anthony Stevens, gets cool with this one (check out his cartoon on the Gutter Talk pages, too.



Next Month

HOT STUFF FROM LAS VEGAS

The CES shebang, where all software people go to tell each other what they're developing is better than anything ever before seen in the history of gaming, and much bigger than anyone else's developments, is over. So that's that, then. No, not quite, 'cos our very own Black Marshall traipsed around for days checking out goodies like KID CHAMELEON — the next big one from Sega after Sonic — LEANDER, EVANDER HOLYFIELD BOXING and loads more.

He's also got a report on what ACCLAIM are up to, converting all their big Nintendo hits for Mega Drive.

Meanwhile, back at home, we'll be looking out with high hopes for PRINCE OF PERSIA, PAPERBOY, DESERT STRIKE and BUCK ROGERS among others.

AND... watch out for the start of a humungous Oli Frey three-part poster — a real window on game-freak city to hang on your door!

The next issue of SEGA FORCE goes on sale from 20 February, and if you don't get it on day one, you may not see it again!

SEGA FORCE



the gob of snot from my left nostril. The letters? I sent invitations to people like Princess Margaret, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dolly from *Emmerdale Farm*, asking them to write. Instead, I got replies from three spotty yoofs from Stockport and a cleaner from Dundee called Morag. And this is not *Blue Peter* — we're not collecting bottletops to help the starving of Bury St. Edmunds. Glad you like the mag, I could grow to like you (between two slices of bread).

Lost for words

Dear Gut,

If I may, I would like to talk about... errrrr... oh dear, I've forgotten what it was I was going to talk about. So instead, I think I'll talk about...that's, ah...no, I can't remember, sorry!

Anthony 'Decisive' Stevens, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

Pratt! (But you draw okay).

Questions, Questions...

Dear Gutter Snipe,

I wonder if you can answer a few questions?

1. If I had *Columns* in my Master Gear and linked up with a friend who had *Columns* in his Game Gear, would the two-player mode work?
2. Is the Game Gear better than the Lynx?
3. Is *Donald Duck* on the Master System totally different to the Mega Drive the game.
4. What would you say was the best game on the Mega Drive, the Game Gear and the Master System?
5. Why is your mag *so* brilliant?
6. Please answer all my questions.

James Goff, Sheffield

1. No
2. Yes. No. Yes. Yes. No. Yes (consensus of opinion from the SF bods). Technically, the Lynx is superior, but my money's on the Game Gear. Plenty of games and add-ons to fiddle with.
3. Yes, TOTALLY different.
4. Errrrr...*Sonic the Hedgehog, Sonic the Hedgehog* (when it appears!) and, errrrr...*Sonic the Hedgehog*.
5. Because it is.
6. That's not a question.

There's nothing beats a nice, crispy roast duck with black cherry sauce. I s'pose Donald would be a bit tough, though — he must be at least ninety by now. Still, he looks fit enough in Craig Whitworth's drawing here. Craig's from Oldham, Lancs, and says would I write back, 'cos he never gets any letters... AAAHH. Never mind, craig, neither do I.

Master System sceptic

Dear Gutter,

I'm considering purchasing a Master System, but with the success of the Mega Drive and now what with the Mega-CD up and coming, I'm worried that the MS hasn't much of a future. What do you reckon, is the Master System worth buying?

Damian Elliot, Gateshead

Damian, the MS isn't due for the scrap bucket just yet! It's probably the cheapest and best 8-bit system around. There are loadsa games for it, many of high quality (check out *Sonic* last issue) and stacks more on their way — US Gold are putting their top programmers on developing new MS games. Obviously the ultra-swish Mega Drive and Mega-CD's where the future lies, but there's less (and more expensive) software. If you get the same pay as me, an MS should do you just fine!

Doug's Dosh Dilemma

Yo Gutter!

Well radical mag, dude! Times are hard, though. £1.95's a lot of dosh to fork out. Bought the first copy of SEGA FORCE, which meant I couldn't afford the *New Kids on the Block* single. However, your well wicked mag plays cool on 45rpm. Can you tell me whether there's gonna be a 12-inch?

Doug 'Gimme Five' Dendyke, Forest of Dean

Check this out! £1.95 is extremely competitive, but if you're having trouble affording the mag, get a paper round, then you can have a crafty read before you slip it through someone's letterbox?! The only 12-incher we have around here's Paul Mellerick's — the classic melody by The Paul Mellerick Experience, 'Those Rainy Day Game Gear Blues'. Failed to chart, bit of a fart, but it makes a good place-mat.

And finally, for the plonkers who've already forgotten the address, here it is again:

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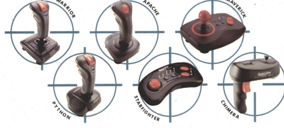
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Complete in no more than ten words the sentence: "A Sega console is better than a best friend because ....

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